

STREET

SMITH'S

SPORT

STORY MAGAZINE

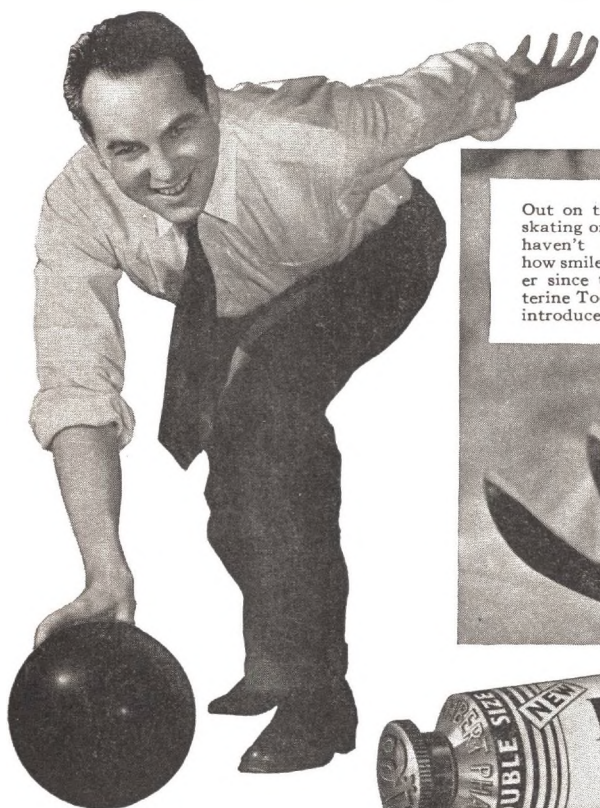
10 CENTS
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SIX GIRLS
& A BASKET
BY HANDLEY CROSS



Maxey Stein

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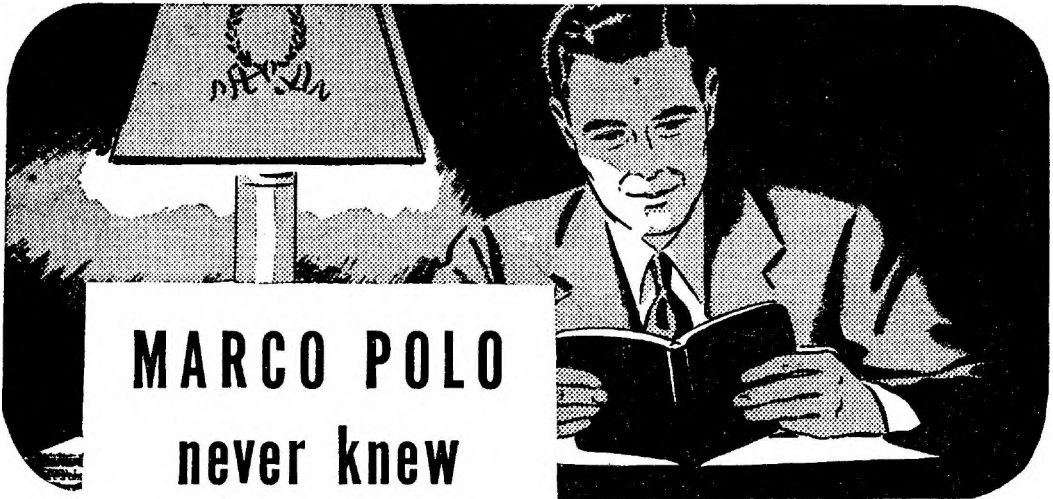
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No. 5

STREET & SMITH'S

1st March
No., 1939

SPORT STORY MAGAZINE

Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.

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All characters used in fiction and semi-fiction stories in this magazine are fictitious. Any similarity in name or characterization to persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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WARMING THE BENCH WITH THE EDITOR

THERE are quite a few unusual things about Jackson Scholz—author of “Hoop Lesson.” His record as a sprinter back in the Gay Twenties is one of them. He was right up at the top, fighting it out with the great Charlie Paddock for the honor of being rated as the “world’s fastest human.” Paddock won the honor, but Scholz made it close—mighty close.

And now Scholz is a star in another field. He is writing fiction of high caliber, that makes him a leading favorite with readers of Sport Story Magazine. In his stories; he draws on scenes of athletic competition in which he has taken part, as well as those of which he has been a spectator.

Scholz is a keen sport fan. I think he can write of more kinds of sport than any other man now contributing to Sport Story. His knowledge is not confined to sprinting. He attends every kind of sport event.

As a member of the New York Athletic Club, he has opportunities of witnessing the varied sports program of that famous athletic institution, and of consulting with the club’s coaches when he needs information on the finer points of the different games.

Last time Scholz came in to see me, I had the original cover painting of this issue in the office.

“How about a basketball yarn to go with that one, Jack?” I asked, showing him the picture. “Can do?”

“Let’s see!” Author Scholz studied the picture closely, and began to whistle “Ten Pretty Girls.”

“There are twelve players in a girls’ basketball game,” I reminded him.

“But they often play under boys’ rules,” he reminded me back.

“O. K., Jack, you win!” I admitted. “And don’t give us a lotta sentimental stuff—just a good basketball yarn with the gal interest well played up! Don’t have your hero make the winning basket in the last minute just because he’s inspired by the thought of—”

“Aw, skip it, chief!” Jack cut me off.

The final result of that confab was the novelette “Hoop Lesson” which leads off this number.

I hope a lot of readers are going to like Skates Kelsey, the big-league hockey scout who appears in “Home-town Hero.” It seems to me that Leslie McFarlane has got something there. Let me know if you’d like another of Skates’ adventures in hunting hockey ivory where it grows.

It’s on these backwoods rinks of Canada and the northern United States—both indoor and outdoor—that the great hockey stars of the future are made. And it’s the job of guys like Skates Kelsey to find ‘em and bring ‘em back alive for the big-time hockey wars.

Bob Bryan is another author who can write about a whole lot of different

sports—baseball, football, basketball, polo, boxing, tennis, track, and what-have-you. Living in California, Bob can see every variety of sport played outdoors. He starts off every year by seeing the Rose Bowl game, and follows the calendar right through. He's frequently to be seen at the American Legion boxing shows in Hollywood, and that's where he picks up a lot of his fight plots. There are lots of young fellas in the fight game like the one in "Iron Chin." They think because they can soak up lots of punishment that they've got the makin's of a champ.

Another writer who occasionally drops in for a chat with the editor is Ben Peter Freeman, who contributes the pro tennis yarn "Ten-grand Set" to this issue. A long, lanky guy is Freeman, with just the build for a tennis player. But he claims he never was much good at the game. Just the same, he *writes* a grand tennis match. A fella must have been right in the thick of a grueling five-set battle to describe one the way Freeman does.

These are the days when everybody north of the Mason-Dixon line is talking about Christiania turns and telemarks and gelandesprungs and stems and different kinds of ski wax. Skiing has gained remarkable popularity in recent years.

New York's famous sports arena, Madison Square Garden, goes ski-conscious every once in a while, and transforms itself into a land of snow and ice, with everything but polar bears to give it a final touch of realism. There's even an eighty-five-foot ski tower, up among the highest girders of the Garden, the start of a slide one hundred and fifty-two feet long.

Leonard Lupton, author of "Telemark Tension," has chosen a primitive snow-country setting for his skiing story—

one that fits in well with the dramatic situations in which he places his characters. Lupton also writes wrestling and boxing stories, choosing his characters from among the traveling carnival folk—the carnies.

Hope you won't think the mag's going soft because of that article "Six Girls and a Basket," by Handley Cross. The fact is that the girls' game has made such progress during the last ten years that it rates a feature article all to itself. And the facts brought out in this article will, I think, be of interest to all basketball fans. So read it before you throw any brickbats at the editor or Handley Cross.

Even the baseball moguls have done a bit of rule-changing for this season. Probably a disease they've caught from the football and basketball coaches. The sacrifice fly is back. But it has to be a scoring fly to count as a sacrifice—not a fly that merely advances a runner a base. It must bring in a run; otherwise the batter is charged with a time-at-bat.

Another rule deals with the matter of signing sandlots players for service in the major leagues. This is now permitted—thus doing away with the under-cover stuff and sleight-of-hand that used to be practiced when a sandlot phenom rated a try-out with a big-league team. With admission of sandlotters to the majors made simpler and less ceremonious, there may be more cases of hungry young players eating themselves out of baseball. It has been done in the past. When a farm lad finds that he can put his legs under the table in a good hotel and order anything he fancies, without paying the check, it's a great temptation to overeat.

This problem of ball players' appetites has been used by Royal Hall as the basis of the plot of his amusing yarn ".400 Eaters" in this issue.

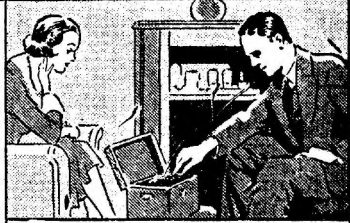


I jumped from \$18 a week to \$50
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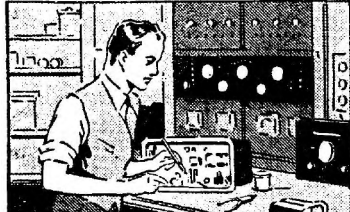
HERE'S
How it
Happened
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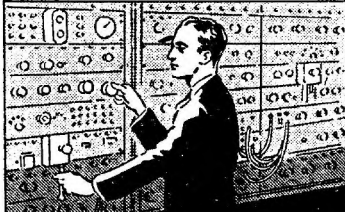
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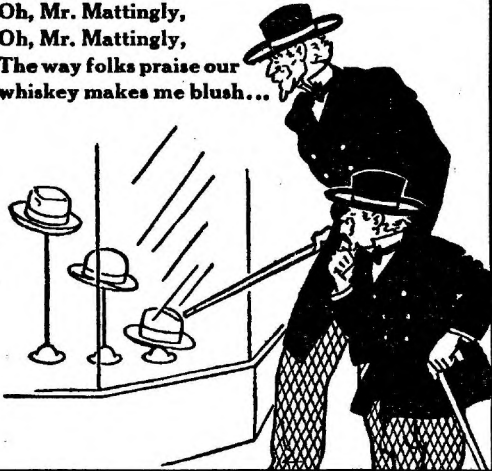
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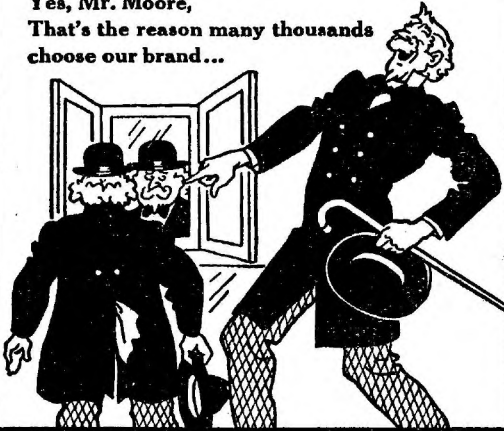
"Oh, Mr. Mattingly,
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The way folks praise our
whiskey makes me blush..."



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is it 'cause we slow distill
and never rush?'"



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Yes, Mr. Moore,
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CARL TEMPLE SCOTTED AT GIRLS' BASKETBALL—
SCOTTED AND CAME TO LEARN HIS UNFORGETTABLE

HOOP LESSON

BY
JACKSON V. SCHOLZ
Author of "Handball Nurse," etc.



The tour of inspection was almost complete. The imposing Grayson Tire Manufacturing Company had unfolded its wonders before Carl Temple's approving eyes. He was filled with a high

and noble resolve to be a credit to this vast organization.

His guide was none other than Mr. Richard Forbes himself, advertising manager. Richard Forbes was a force-

ful man of middle age, whose polite deference to young Temple might conceivably have been inspired by the ponderous block of Grayson Tire stock owned by Carl's grandfather.

"And this," announced Mr. Forbes with pride, "is our gymnasium."

He threw open a big door, and displayed a well-equipped layout which would have done credit to the average college. He waited confidently for Carl's burst of enthusiasm, a burst which failed to materialize.

Carl didn't show enthusiasm because he didn't feel any. Quite the contrary. The gym itself was O. K. He thoroughly approved of the recreational possibilities it suggested. The thing that left him cold was the present use to which it was being put.

"What are *they* doing?" he demanded.

It was a purely unnecessary question, because Carl could see well enough what was going on. His words carried an open disapproval which Mr. Forbes was quick to catch.

"That," said Forbes with a touch of challenge in his voice, "is our girls' basketball team, the Dianas."

Carl looked the girls over, frowning; but, even in his prejudiced frame of mind, he couldn't find them unattractive. They were vitally alive and healthy. They moved with unimpeded grace and sureness. Not only that, but they handled the ball as though they actually knew what the game was about.

But Carl's long, somewhat studious face refused to light with approval. His brown eyes remained thoughtful and vaguely hostile. He wasn't a diplomat to start with, and the long, prominent line of his jaw suggested a certain puritan stubbornness. He was a man of firm convictions.

"You don't seem to care for the idea," guessed Forbes quietly.

Carl started slightly. He hadn't realized that his antagonism was so apparent. Common sense suggested that he

keep his trap shut, but youthful theories were combined with a certain unrestricted frankness.

"I'm afraid I don't."

"Why not?" Forbes wanted to know.

Carl Temple was getting into hot water and he knew it. He was willing enough to defend his theories when the proper time arrived, but he had sense enough to realize that this was not the time. Why, he hadn't even started working for the Grayson Tire Company yet.

Whatever defense he might have established, however, was rather violently postponed. He and Forbes were standing by the side line, and the first warning of danger came from an alarmed chorus of feminine squeals.

Carl was too wrapped up in his immediate problem to react as quickly as he might ordinarily have done. In consequence, a wild heave of the basketball caught him smack on the ear.

NOW, a basketball is not a lethal weapon; but, on the other hand, it packs considerably more of a wallop than a feather pillow. Catching Carl unprepared, as it did, it almost floored him.

He staggered a few steps to catch his balance, then whirled angrily toward the source of the attack. It was bad enough to be clipped in that manner under any condition, but having the indignity perpetrated by a girl made things just twice as bad.

Not only that, but the girl herself was suddenly standing right before him. At least, one of the girls was standing there, and, whether or not she was the one who had thrown the ball, she seemed willing, at any rate, to take the blame.

"Are you hurt?" she inquired anxiously.

Carl looked down from his altitude of six feet three into a pair of blue-gray, long-lashed eyes. He felt his irritation grow in face of the girl's undeniably at-

tractiveness. Her eyes were wide, sober and concerned, but her full lips failed to conceal entirely a tiny quirk of amusement at the corners.

Now, Carl Temple wasn't a roughneck in any sense of the word. He had, under ordinary conditions, his full quota of chivalry, both by inheritance and by training. It just so happened that the present conditions were so far out of the ordinary that he was caught a mile off first base.

In the first place, he was sore at himself because of his blundering admission to Richard Forbes. In the second place, he was deeply annoyed that his unflattering opinion of husky women athletes should be so rudely disproved by this trim, lithe girl before him. Thirdly, his ear hurt like the devil.

"What makes you think that a girl could throw a basketball hard enough to hurt a flea?" he inquired harshly. "Anyway, I deserved to get hit. Only a dope would stand around a girls' basketball game without keeping his eye peeled for wild heaves. I'd have known that if I'd had a nickel's worth of brains."

The concern swiftly left the girl's eyes. A slow fire kindled there, and there was no more humor at the corners of her lips. Her voice, when she spoke, was soft to the ear, but there the softness ceased.

"I'm glad," she said, "that we both agree on your own estimate of your brain capacity."

It was a neat thrust. Carl had to accord it grudging admiration. It had the unfortunate effect, however, of unlimbering his vocabulary still further.

"It's rather a pity," he said, "that your basketball isn't on a par with your wisecracks."

THE danger signals flared becomingly in her eyes. Things were settling down to a first-class word battle, when the contest was abruptly interrupted.

The interruption came from a person whom Carl had not noticed in his absorption with other things. He was a man of about Carl's own height, handsome and overtailored. He came barging, uninvited, up to the group.

"How about this mug, Jean?" he demanded. "Is he shootin' off his mouth too much? Shall I slap 'im down?"

The guy was about as tactful as a water buffalo, but Carl began to feel a fierce, warming pleasure at his presence.

The girl said sharply, "Keep out of this, Greg," but Greg was all steamed up with the old protective instinct.

"Listen, you," he growled at Carl. "No wise guy can come around here makin' smart remarks to these girls—not while Greg Raff is around."

"I'm glad to hear that," said Carl with a tight grin. "And I'm also glad that Greg Raff is the one who's going to try to stop me."

Greg probably would have tried it at that, but Forbes got fed up with all that childishness.

"Grow up, both of you!" he snapped.

"That's sound advice," said Jean. "But I'm afraid it's wasted. It's an open-and-shut case of arrested development in both cases."

With that broadside, she turned and walked off, leaving a flat and nonpulsed silence behind her. Carl suffered a swift and unpleasant let-down. Greg Raff seemed willing enough to go on with the argument, but Forbes sidetracked him.

"It's probably a poor time to introduce you two men," he admitted. "But as long as you're both working for the same company, it might be a good idea for you to shake hands and get off on the right foot. Carl Temple, this is Greg Raff."

Carl got wise to himself and stuck out his hand. "Sorry I went off half cocked," he said.

But Greg wasn't having any or that

stuff, The heat remained in his narrow-set eyes.

"Nuts to that!" he snapped. "If this guy's working for this outfit, we'll have plenty of time to meet again."

He whirled and strode off, leaving Carl with the firm conviction that they *would* meet again.

CHAPTER II.

FLASH IN THE PAN

AS they left the gym, Carl tried hard to imagine a less-encouraging start for a young man, such as himself, to make with a new organization; but he was quite convinced that he'd set a new high in unpleasant beginnings.

He found small, but only temporary, consolation over the fact that the sock in the ear with the basketball had at least drawn a red herring across the trail of his conversation with Mr. Forbes regarding girls and basketball. In this respect, however, he underestimated the tenacity of Richard Forbes.

"You know, Temple," said Forbes conversationally, "as long as you are going to be one of my assistants in the advertising and publicity department, don't you think it wise that we should start out by understanding each other?"

Carl felt it coming, but managed a convincing, "Yes, sir."

"Then just why do you object to girls' basketball?"

Carl knew there was no use beating around the bush, so he took a long breath and hopped in.

"I don't object to them playing basketball if they want to," he said. "But I do feel that it's beneath the dignity of an organization of this importance to exploit a girl's team for publicity purposes. The Grayson Company makes tires. It makes good enough tires to sell on their own merit, without the help of any ballyhoo of that sort."

"I see. You think it's undignified."

"Yes," admitted Carl stubbornly. "I do. I don't think any girl with self-respect would allow herself to be made part of a three-ring circus."

Even as he pulled that one out of the bag, Carl remembered the girl called Jean. He had the uncomfortable hunch that he had spoken out of turn, concerning her, at least. But he was a young man of set notions and high ideals.

Forbes' faces remained expressionless. "You know, of course, that we have a men's basketball team, too. Do you feel the same way about them?"

Carl sensed that he was being forced into making a complete donkey of himself, but he stuck to his guns.

"To a lesser extent, yes," he admitted doggedly. "It isn't my idea of advertising or publicity."

"I'm sorry to hear that," said Forbes. "I happen to know that you had a fine record in college basketball. I was hoping that I could induce you to play on our team."

Carl began to sweat. "Mr. Forbes," he said miserably, "I'm just a dumb kid fresh out of college. You probably know more about advertising and publicity than I'll ever know. But I still have my own ideas. If they're no good, I'll have to get 'em knocked out of me the hard way."

Forbes laid an understanding hand on Carl's arm. "O. K., son," he said. "You may be right, at that."

Carl felt like a mug, but he knew one thing. Mr. Forbes was one swell guy.

HE threw himself into his job, working like a horse during the week that followed. At the end of that time, he was surprised to receive a summons from the president of the company, James Grayson.

He got a real shock, though, when he entered Mr. Grayson's office. He received but a hasty, fleeting impression of the ruddy, lion-headed man behind the desk. It was the other occupant of

the office that battered her way into his consciousness.

It was the girl called Jean. She was sitting in a deep chair beside the desk. In her smart suit and her pert little hat, she was quite a different person from the one Carl had seen in basketball shorts. He had to admit, though, that she was every bit as attractive.

Carl's mind was racing dizzily as he turned toward the big boss. "You sent for me, sir?" he asked a trifle thickly.

"Yes, Temple, I did," said Grayson affably. "I understand that you're quite a basketball player. My daughter, here, has seen you play in college."

"Your—your *daughter*?" gasped Carl involuntarily. Then: "I'm sorry. I didn't mean—"

"We've met before," Jean explained, with gentle irony.

Carl felt himself getting red, but there was nothing he could do about it. Grayson kindly saved him further embarrassment. If the older man wondered what it was all about, he was tactful enough not to say so.

"We're proud of our basketball teams," said Grayson. "We have a fine men's team, but we're weak in reserves. We could use a man of your caliber."

Carl had lots more than the nickel's worth of brains with which he had credited himself, and he used them now. He sensed clearly that Grayson had learned through Forbes of Carl's refusal to play. He also sensed that Jean, working through her dad, had managed to bring the matter to this court of high appeal.

Carl also knew that he didn't have to play basketball if he didn't want to. The size of his grandfather's holdings in the company would effectively protect him from being fired, and it was that very item that brought Carl to his decision. He was too stiff-necked and proud to hide behind his grandfather's millions.

"I'll report for practice at once, sir," he said tonelessly.

"That's fine, my boy," said Grayson.

"I'm sure you will be a big addition to the team."

Carl took that as his dismissal. Jean rose at the same time. Carl didn't see the big wink she tossed at her dad, but he was acutely conscious of her presence as she joined him in his indignant progress down the hall.

"Don't be angry," she said.

It was an olive branch which Carl ignored. This girl had made a sucker of him at every turn. Now, she'd caused him to be railroaded into something which was entirely against all his principles. He stopped and faced her.

"If you wanted revenge, you've had it," he told her sharply.

Anger raised its banners once more in her eyes. "If you thought I wanted revenge, you're a fool!" she snapped. "You mean no more to me than a piece of good basketball material for the Grayson squad. But even in that I was probably wrong. We have a better center in Greg Raff than you ever have been or ever will be."

Carl got a fine view, then, of her straight-shouldered, retreating back. She'd made a chump of him again, and he had to swallow it. He tried to hate her, but fell far short. If only she weren't so damned good-looking!

"Be your age!" he snarled to himself, as he hurried back to work.

CARL showed up late that afternoon at basketball practice, but his presence was no cause for celebration among the Grippers, as the team called itself in honor of one of the famous Grayson tires. Greg Raff seemed to be the only one to show any real pleasure.

"Gentlemen," he announced, "the Grippers are now invincible. We have with us none other than Mr. Carl Temple, famous college star, who will show us how basketball is really played."

Greg's clumsy attempt at wit fell pretty flat, because none of the other

Grippers had the bad manners to laugh at it. On the whole, Carl sized them up as a clean-cut bunch of men. Greg Raff seemed to be the misfit.

The coach, Bosco Smith, snapped: "It's guys like you, Greg, that generally have the most to learn."

Greg laughed that one off, and Bosco came over to Carl.

"Glad to have you with us, Temple," he said, without too much enthusiasm. "You played center in college, didn't you?"

Carl nodded. He wasn't enthusiastic, either.

"We need another good man for that job in case something happens to Greg. Want to give it a whirl?"

"Why not?" answered Carl indifferently.

Carl was in reasonably good shape, but Bosco gave him a few days to get back into his stride before using him in work-outs. And during those few days, Carl found out why the Grippers accepted a college star so casually.

It was somewhat of a shock to Carl to realize that this Grayson squad could take the average college team without working up a sweat. There wasn't a man on the team under six feet. They were fast as greyhounds and could almost hit the hoop blindfolded.

Under ordinary conditions, Carl would have got a great kick out of playing with an outfit like the Grippers. As it was, however, the prospect left him cold. He'd had his fill of basketball in college. He wanted to be a business man now, and he couldn't, for the life of him, see how a man could give his best efforts to both at the same time. He couldn't see any connection between the two.

As a result, Carl was not at his best upon the occasion of his first work-out. He was playing center for the second team. He was pitted, of course, against Greg Raff, and Greg made the best of the golden opportunity.

He played circles around Carl. He covered him like a tent on the occasions when Carl had the ball, and when the ball was in Greg's possession, he seldom lost it through any efforts of Carl's.

Of course, Carl's heart wasn't in the game; but, even so, he had to recognize the face that Greg was the best player he'd ever been stacked against. Greg's technique and skill bordered upon sheer brilliance.

CARL fostered the grim hope that Greg might resort to a little rough stuff. Carl would have enjoyed that in his present frame of mind; but Greg effectively forestalled any enjoyment of that sort by swinging to the exaggerated, opposite extreme. He brought tennis etiquette into play.

"Tough luck, old man," he'd say when he slipped in to take a pass intended for Carl. Or, "Sorry, old chap, my ball, I believe," when he swerved around Carl in a high-speed dribble.

All in all, he managed to make Carl look like a first-rate cluck, and it was natural enough that such elaborate patronizing should finally work its way under Carl's shell of indifference.

Carl came to life with a sudden burst of energy that surprised even himself. Bosco, acting as referee, called a held ball between a second-team guard and Soapy Nedrick, right forward for the first team.

On the jump, Soapy got the tap. He flipped it cleanly toward String Metz, the other forward. It was then that Carl staged his burglar act by zipping in to intercept the tap.

He hit the floor running, and converted the interception into a hot dribble. He went galloping down the side line before the first team could scramble back to its defense positions.

Greg was caught so completely flat-footed that Carl had a swell head start. He went galloping across the center line toward his own goal. Nick Dag-

gert, first-team right guard, who was laying back for sleeper plays, came sliding in to break things up, but Carl foxed him.

He faked a swerve to the right. Nick fell for it, and Carl tapped the ball above his head in an air dribble. At the same instant Carl swerved to the left, ducked around Nick, and nabbed the ball one-handed before it reached the floor.

A short, rattling dribble toward the net, and Carl flipped it neatly in to complete a spectacular play that left the Grippers bug-eyed.

Greg alone didn't seem to care much for the exhibition. He did his best to laugh it off as a crazy piece of luck, but his efforts fell somewhat flat. The Grippers knew class when they saw it.

Bosco Smith studied Carl with tense speculation. "Where did *that* burst of form come from?" he wanted to know. "Where have you been hiding *that* rabbit?"

But Carl couldn't tell him. As a matter of fact, he scarcely knew himself. Having once got it out of his system, his old apathy seemed to return.

Once more Greg played circles about him, and the momentary respect of the Grippers swiftly waned. None took exception to Greg's loud remark, when Bosco brought the scrimmage to a close.

"I called it right the first time," boasted Greg. "I guess I know a flash in the pan when I see one."

There was no comeback to that one, and Carl let it pass. He was thoroughly disgusted with the whole unhappy mess.

CHAPTER III. CAPTAIN JEAN

BUT if Carl Temple thought his cup was full of grief, he didn't know the half of it. Richard Forbes called Carl into his office a few days later, and Carl was entirely unprepared for the jolt of his next assignment.

He began to have his qualms when Forbes started talking about Dianas.

"The Dianas," said Forbes, "have their annual game next Saturday evening against the Kevlin Tire Company's Amazons. You probably haven't been around here long enough to understand the intense rivalry between Grayson Tires and Kevlin Tires."

"I know they're our chief competitors in business," admitted Carl.

"Which puts it rather mildly," said Forbes. "Actually, the two concerns are downright enemies, and that enmity is carried into our two basketball games, both the girls' and the boys' games."

Carl remained silent. The conversation was creeping on delicate ground. Forbes continued:

"Both companies attach tremendous importance to these games. I happen to be tied up over the week end, so I'm sending you down to Sampson City with the Dianas."

Carl's jaw dropped open. "Sending *me* down?" he bleated with alarm. "Hey, listen! Why pick on me? What do *I* know about chaperoning a girls' basketball team?"

"Nothing, I assume," conceded Forbes dryly. "The girls will be well chaperoned by a couple of their mothers. You'll go along for purely business reasons, to check up on gate receipts, attend to the teams' expenses and other similar details. The basketball teams are sponsored by this department, and that means that we have to have a representative on hand."

It was a dismal moment for Carl Temple. Once more he was tempted to hide behind his grandfather's dough, to insist that he was an advertising man rather than a representative of a travel agency for girls.

But a sense of duty hastened to his rescue. If this stuff, daffy as it seemed, was actually included in his job, he'd see it through, no matter how it bruised his pride.

"I'm sure I can handle things all right," he said, as cheerfully as he could.

He took the Dianas to Sampson City, and the trip was uneventful. If he harbored any strange ideas that he'd be pestered by the girls, or if he clung to any sheepish hope that Jean Grayson would seek his company, he was effectively disillusioned. None of them came near him.

That, of course, would be Jean's doing, and this knowledge caused him a strange and illogical resentment. After all, they didn't have to treat him as if he had the smallpox.

UPON arriving at Sampson City, therefore, Carl was not in a very good frame of mind. He established the Dianas in a hotel, then contacted the newspapermen and said the proper things. He praised his team, and he praised the game of basketball for women, all of which griped him plenty.

He was sulking by himself in the hotel lobby a few hours before game time. He was sitting on a leather davenport when a stranger came over and sat beside him.

The stranger was a genial, rotund sort of soul who seemed to want to talk. Carl answered with uncommunicative grunts until the man, who had introduced himself as Bledso by this time, brought up a subject close to Carl's heart.

"We got a girls' basketball team registered here," he announced, with obvious disapproval. "Me, I think it's disgraceful for a reputable company to send those kids out on a court to cavort around just for the sake of publicity. I think it ought to be abolished."

For the first time, Carl was conscious that Mr. Bledso was a man of intelligence.

"That's the time you said a mouthful," Carl growled. "It's a disgrace to the sport."

Bledso flicked cigar ashes on the car-

pet. "Glad you agree with me," he said. "Well"—he heaved himself to his feet—"I guess I'll be moving on."

Carl forgot about him as soon as he had left. Carl had other things on his mind. The present problem was whether or not he should attend the game.

He decided vehemently that he wouldn't, but when game time came, he found himself heading toward the Kevlin gym. He wasn't going to watch Jean Grayson, of course. He was merely going for the purpose of assuring himself that girls' basketball was as absurd as he knew it to be. He even went so far as to *buy* a ticket, in order to attend the game as inconspicuously as possible.

He settled himself in his seat with an air of boredom, awaiting the pathetic sight of ten girls trying to play basketball by men's rules. The only concession they made to themselves, as the weaker sex, was to divide the game into four ten-minute periods, rather than two twenty-minute periods.

The game got under way, and Carl found, to his amazement, that his advance theories of girls' basketball seemed to be taking considerable drubbing.

In the first place, there was none of the clumsy cavorting about that he had expected. These girls were trained to the lithe, fine condition of experienced dancers. All of their natural gracefulness was brought into play.

The next jolt he received came from the indisputable fact that they were actually playing basketball. From a technical standpoint, these girls had been well coached. They knew what the game was all about, and they put their knowledge into use with brisk efficiency.

The next step in Carl's education was virtually inevitable. In spite of his best efforts to the contrary, he began to take an interest in the game, purely upon the grounds that it was an exciting contest.

But beneath this interest ran a perverse and selfish strain of thought. He

wanted to see the Dianas lose. He had another reason, too, a more personal season. He wanted to see this self-assured Jean Grayson humbled. She was accustomed to having things entirely too much her own way.

SO he watched with a certain grim satisfaction as the heavier and stronger Amazons forged ahead 17—12 in the first half of the game. The Dianas fought them every inch of the way, but they were battling against tough odds.

When the teams went in for their fifteen-minute rest between halves, Carl logically assumed that it was all over but the shouting, and the Kevlin fans, by their hilarity, seemed to think so, too.

But that's where everyone guessed wrong. The Dianas came out tight-lipped for the third quarter. Carl had had enough experience with athletic teams to realize that they looked dangerous. The Dianas were far from being a beaten team. They'd found a new supply of courage.

It showed right from the first play. The tall Amazon center got the tip-off, but a slender form came flashing in to nab the ball before it reached the Amazon for whom it was intended.

Jean Grayson had broken up that play. She cut fast for the side line, dribbling accurately as she ran. An Amazon guard came in fast to break it up, but Jean whipped a clean pass under the other's arm.

The pass reached a teammate, and Jean broke for the basket like a sprinter. Jean's teammate pivoted clear of a guarding Amazon, and slammed through a neat bounce pass.

Jean scooped up that pass on the dead run. Two fast dribbles brought her to the free-throw line. A big Amazon guard came rushing in. Jean stopped with a suddenness that brought a squeal from her rubber soles upon the floor.

She faked a shot at the basket, and

the Amazon guard fell for the bait. She sailed into the air, and Jean took deliberate time for her real throw. The ball left her hands in a smooth, unhurried arc. It whipped through the net without touching the basket rim. 17—14.

Led by Jean, the Dianas scored another field goal before the Amazons awoke to the new threat. Then the Amazons, leading 17—16, really got down to work. They uncorked their reserve power and their entire bag of tricks. They needed all of them against the courage of the visitors.

They pulled gradually ahead again as their advantage of height and weight began to show. The third quarter ended with the score 25—19.

Five minutes rest, and the final quarter got under way. The Dianas were a terribly weary bunch of youngsters, but their spirits were still unbeaten in the face of almost hopeless odds.

Carl wondered at this incredible mental stamina among girls. He saw them take up the fight where they had left off. He saw them rip into the powerful Amazons with fanatical faith. And he saw the Amazons waver under the attack.

Then, whether he liked it or not, Carl was forced to accept the true reason for this miracle. Jean Grayson, of course. He would have known it sooner had he not stubbornly closed his mind to the real greatness of her spirit.

Relentlessly she was whipping her weary body to unbelievable achievement, and the others were swept along by her example. Even from where he sat Carl could feel the force of her personality. The crowd felt it, too, and even the Amazon fans gave grudging tribute to the brightness of her courage.

IT was something so almost tangible that the Amazon players must have felt it, too. They felt the unnerving shock of facing a team which, apparently licked, refuses to stay licked. The

Amazon offense began to wobble. Their shots at the hoop became more infrequent and wider of the mark.

Their defense was next to weaken. It couldn't stand the repeated savage thrusts of the Dianas; thrusts invariably led by their tight-lipped, indomitable captain. The Amazons were facing something they couldn't understand.

The closing minutes dragged away, and the Dianas doggedly closed the gap. Jean herself tied the score with a long, looping shot from the outer edge of the free-throw circle. 31—31.

The game was almost at an end. The Amazons put the ball into play from under the Dianas' basket. The Amazons made a desperate effort to work the ball into a scoring position, but the Dianas' center broke it up. She whipped the ball to Jean, and Jean headed again for her own basket.

An Amazon guard broke up Jean's dribble, broke it up with a roughness which brought an angry blast from the whistle of the referee. He grabbed the ball, handed it to Jean, and motioned her toward the free-throw circle.

It was a tough spot for anybody to be in. That one free throw would probably decide the game. Carl saw Jean stumble through sheer weariness as she moved toward the free-throw line.

For an instant, her whole body drooped as though suddenly aware of its vast responsibility. Carl saw her draw a deep breath into her lungs. He saw her shoulders stiffen. He saw a tight little smile find its way to her lips. And suddenly Carl knew that Jean would make that basket.

She made her throw, a calm, unhurried gesture backed by steady nerves. The ball obeyed her will, and dropped through the net. The score was 32—31.

The Grayson fans went wild, and Carl found himself on his feet, making a wild effort to split his vocal cords. He was playing a sincere and honest tribute to real greatness.

The game ended a few seconds later with the score unchanged. The Kevlin fans filed sullenly out, while the Grayson fans boiled forth to celebrate their victory.

Carl waited in the hotel lobby until the team came in. He was an honest sort of guy who liked to give credit where credit was due. He went up to Jean and got the load off his chest.

"You played a magnificent game, Miss Grayson," he said with an awkwardness that annoyed him. "I want to congratulate you and your teammates."

Jean's gray-green eyes were cool. "That's very big of you, Mr. Temple," she acknowledged. "I'm sure your moral support had a great deal to do with it."

"You're quite right about my lack of moral support," Carl returned the crack stiffly. "I was merely trying to congratulate a great basketball player."

He saw a quick light of uncertainty in her eyes, but he was smart enough to make his getaway before she had a chance to answer. Given half a chance, he might let her make a fool of him again.

CHAPTER IV.

SPARK PLUG NO. 2

CARL needn't have worried over the possibility of somebody making a fool of him. He found, upon the following morning, that he'd done an excellent job of this himself.

The Sampson City *Herald* gave considerable space on the sport page to an exclusive interview which one of their reporters, by the name of Horace Bledso, had secured from Carl Temple, manager of the Dianas. The headline read:

Manager of Dianas thinks girls' basketball should be abolished.

Under this, it went on to tell how Mr. Temple considered the game a disgrace to the sport.

It was a scoop, all right. Carl had

been nicely tricked into shooting off his mouth. He didn't have a leg to stand on. It would sound rather stupid, at this late date, to admit that he had found the game to be entirely different from what he had expected.

The news, of course, got around the Grayson plant with the speed of a hurricane, and had almost the same effect, coming as it did upon the heels of the Dianas' spectacular victory. It made Carl Temple just about as popular as a leaky roof.

His boss' comment on the matter was terse and to the point.

"It was a stupid, inexcusable blunder, Temple," Forbes told him coldly. "It's my guess that you can't expect much coöperation in the future from the various departments of this company. I'm afraid you've cooked yourself for good, young man."

It sure looked that way. Carl didn't get the full significance of the thing at first. It crept upon him by degrees, until he had to accept the bald fact that he was facing a major disaster.

His ability as an advertising man, his pull, everything was worthless now. He was headed for dismal failure unless he could square himself with the employees of the Grayson plant. And the chances for that looked mighty slim. Folks adopted the attitude that he simply didn't exist.

Upon the occasions when he met Jean Grayson she looked through him as though he were a plate-glass window. It seemed incredible that an entire company could attach that much importance to a chance remark against one of their basketball teams.

Even though Carl reported daily for practice, he was left entirely out of the growing excitement which heralded the approach of the big game of the season, the Grippers versus the Kevlin Non-Skids.

It wasn't that Carl's game still remained indifferent and uninspired. It

went deeper than that. It was the calm assumption that Carl had no *right* to be included in anything having to do with Grayson Tires.

THEN came the swift upheaval, which tossed Carl into the middle of things whether he liked it or not. The Gripper fans, stunned at first by the enormity of the thing, finally allowed themselves to be ruled by rage.

Greg Raff sold out to the enemy. Two days before the game, he left the Grippers cold. He moved out bag and baggage to join the Non-Skids.

So that's how Carl Temple found himself in the line-up against the Non-Skids. It happened with a suddenness that left him resentful and bewildered. He didn't want to play for advertising purposes. He was still stubborn in that conviction. He had no desire to play himself bug-eyed for these people who hated his guts anyway.

But if Carl disliked the prospect, his teammates appeared to dislike it even more. They were steamed up to a high degree of resentment against Greg Raff, but their anger was tinged with hopelessness. Carl was the best man they had to match against Greg Raff, and there was plenty of previous evidence that Carl didn't have the stuff.

Bosco Smith's pep talk before the game fell sadly flat. He couldn't get around the fact that Carl Temple was the weak, ineffective cog in his machine.

"Get out there, gang, and do the best you can," Bosco finished lamely.

The early stages of the first half brought plenty of action, but the Non-Skids grabbed an early lead and held it. Greg fitted neatly into the Non-Skid line-up, and seemed to thrive on the furious boos from the Grayson stands.

Carl wasn't a quitter in any sense of the word. He believed in doing his best in all jobs that he tackled. He

gave everything he had in this job; everything, that is, except a fierce, overpowering desire to win. He simply didn't have that to give.

Greg outplayed him, as usual, in all departments. Carl's play was mechanical. Greg's game seemed to be a series of vindictive spurts.

The other members of the Grippers did their desperate best to lend a helping hand to Carl. The guards, Soapy Nedrick and Sam Kress, tried to cover Greg when Carl failed, and the alert Non Skid squad took full advantage of all the openings thus left.

After five minutes of play, Bosco yanked Carl from the game, and sent in a kid by the name of Danny Ober. He did a good, honest job, and got along with his teammates better than Carl had done. Even so, the half ended with the Non-Skids on the long end of an 18-7 score.

SUNK in a mood of sullen resignation, Carl did not join the rest of the squad in the dressing room. He felt the urge to fill his lungs with clean, fresh air. He slipped out a side entrance of the gym.

He almost stumbled on a small figure sitting huddled on the top step. There was something so abject in her posture that he was momentarily startled.

"Are . . . are you hurt?" he stammered.

The girl raised her head. Carl drew a quick breath. It was Jean Grayson. She'd been crying.

"Oh, it's you," she said dully. "Please go 'way."

"But look," insisted Carl untactfully. "You're crying. If you're hurt I can—"

She made a resigned gesture with her hands. "I suppose," she said, "that you'll always be a complete and blundering fool. Of course I'm crying. I'm crying because the Grippers are getting licked, and because they haven't a

chance in the world to win. It's something you couldn't understand, so please go away."

But Carl didn't go away, not immediately, at any rate. His feet seemed frozen to the spot, as all his physical energy was centered inward. A door was opening in his mind, a heavy door that swung on ponderous hinges. Something was trying to pass through that door, some hidden thought that had been there all the time.

It came at last. It was a vivid picture of a thoroughly exhausted girl leading an equally exhausted team to victory. It was a slow understanding of a bright and soaring courage. And the understanding was even more devastating because Carl knew that he himself had shown a lack of that same brand of valor.

He was ashamed as he had never been before in his life.

He left then, and made his way back to the dressing room. The weary, discouraged team scarcely gave him a glance. He waited until they had headed for the floor before drawing Bosco aside.

"Look, coach," he said tensely. "I've got to get in that second half."

Bosco shrugged impatiently. "You had your chance," he said. "I—" About that time he turned to face Carl, and his voice trailed off. He stared into Carl's eyes, then: "Well, I'll be damned," he said. "Sure, Carl, you can start."

The Grippers didn't like the idea. Carl saw Soapy Nedrick, the captain, protesting vehemently to Bosco, but Bosco stood pat.

Greg Raff was the only one who seemed pleased with the substitution. "I'll tell the world your coach is hard to convince," he said to Carl. "But why should I kick if he wants to make it easier for me? It'll give me a chance to rest."

THE referee called the centers to the jumping circle. The members of the two squads took their places. The captains signified that they were ready. The referee tossed the ball, and the second half was under way.

Carl came out of his crouch like a skyrocket. It was a clean, accurate jump that caught Greg entirely by surprise. Carl got the tap a good two inches above Greg. It was an accurate flip straight to String Metz, left forward.

But Greg wasn't the only one to be taken by surprise. String, too, was almost caught flat-footed at this unexpected happening. He almost muffed the ball, but managed to bring it down into a dribble.

The Grippers broke fast for their positions, and the Non-Skids covered with their customary skill. The Grippers had a tough time getting the ball into scoring territory. It was Carl who broke like a flash for the basket, and was completely uncovered for the moment.

Soapy had the ball at the time, but he hesitated an instant too long, as though unwilling to believe his eyes. When he finally shot the pass through, it was wild. A Non-Skid guard snagged it, and the visitors started their dizzy attack upfloor.

Carl was after Greg like a panther. A sweet pass came through to Greg, leading him by just the right amount. It was almost at Greg's fingertips when Carl came winging out of nowhere.

Carl picked the ball out of the air like picking an apple off a tree. Even as his hand reached it, he swerved to avoid going out of bounds. His shoes gripped the floor at a dangerous angle, but they held. The next second, Carl was dribbling at top speed down the side line.

The whiplike speed of the maneuver caught the Non-Skids with their necks

out. Their five-man defense had no chance to form before Carl was winging into his own territory. Only one man remained between him and the goal.

The Non-Skid guard moved in cautiously, but Carl didn't slacken speed. He faked a swift dodge to the left. The guard moved over, and swerved to the right.

At the same instant Carl slapped the dribble at a sharp angle over to his left hand. It was a long chance, and a risky bit of technique to pull. The point was that Carl got by with it. He was in the open—under the basket—and the goal was scored. 18—9.

NOBODY knew what to make of it. The Gripper fans yelled in a confused sort of way. Greg assured his teammates that it was merely a flash in the pan, but Soapy Nedrick wasn't willing to take that explanation this time.

"What goes on?" he demanded, edging up to Carl.

"I've been eatin' raw meat," snapped Carl. "Get in here and give me a little help."

"You'll get it, guy," grinned Soapy. "We're off to the races."

It took two more field goals by the Grippers to knock the flash-in-the-pan idea out of Greg's mind. Even then he found trouble in accepting the idea that Carl was really hot.

And Carl *was* hot. He didn't seem to be *trying* any harder than he had before; it was merely that the feel of the game had crept into his bones. He was playing basketball again; playing it because he loved it.

The Grippers caught the fever of the thing. They didn't know what was going on, except that they had a whirlwind in their midst. And that's all a good team needs to know. They went to town.

The Non-Skids tightened up to meet the threat, and the game soared to new

and dizzy heights. Carl had never been in a game as great as this before, and that fact added to his flaming inspiration.

Greg turned on the steam, but he couldn't handle Carl that night. His normal game was better than Carl's, but Greg was fighting something he couldn't understand. It was a definite mental handicap, a handicap which gave Carl the slight edge he needed.

The Grippers battled upward. The minutes ticked away, and the score crept closer. Even in the heat of battle, Carl couldn't help but compare this game with the one in which he had seen Jean play. They were amazingly alike, only this time Carl was acting as the spark plug.

No time to think of that, however. In the closing minutes the Grippers tied the score, 27—27.

There was a nerve-racking moment when the Non-Skids made a violent, desperate rally. They stormed the Gripper defense, but to no avail. The Non-Skid center tried a long, looping shot over the massed defenders of the goal. The ball hit the rim of the hoop and bounded high. It missed the basket on the way down. A Non-Skid guard recovered, but was cut off from a clean shot at the hoop.

He tried a wild backward shot over his head. That toss also hit the rim, hesitated and finally dropped on the outside. Carl sailed high in the air and nabbed it. He flipped it across to String Metz. String snapped it to Sam Kress, left guard, and the Grippers took over the offensive.

The ball came to Carl in mid-court. He started a fast dribble—and suddenly felt the roof drop on him.

IT was Greg Raff. Making a fine show of playing the ball, he came barging into Carl like a load of coal. They hit the floor together as the referee's whistle blasted angrily.

It was a swell collision, but neither

man was more than badly shaken up. The referee called a personal on Greg, but saw fit to award only one free throw, under the impression that the attack was not deliberate. He handed the ball to Carl, and motioned toward the free-throw line.

Carl's heart zoomed toward his throat. Once more the similarity between this and the other game struck him with numbing force. Only seconds were left to play, and now *he* was the one who could probably win the game by a single toss.

The ball felt heavy in his hands as he approached the line. The tense hush of the crowd rested weightily upon his shoulders. Silently he prayed for a courage equal to Jean Grayson's.

His muscles felt taut and drawn. Deliberately he shook them loose. He drew a deep breath, just as she had done. He straightened his shoulders and fastened his eyes solidly upon the hoop. He crouched smoothly. On the recoil, the ball slid unhurriedly from his hands.

He lived through a dreadful eternity as the ball made its brief trip. For an awful instant he was certain that the throw was short. Then it seemed too long. It was the greatest miracle of his life when it finally settled cleanly through the net.

The Non-Skid's frantic rally was cut short by the final gun, but Carl had known, somehow, that it would be like that. It *had* to be to complete the pattern of the two games which destiny had decreed should be so similar.

The Gripper fans almost hammered Carl to pieces in their joy, but Carl loved every friendly wallop.

Jean finally reached him. She was smiling now. "It's my turn to offer congratulations," she said "Will you accept them more graciously than I did?"

"Will I?" Carl almost shouted, as he grabbed clumsily for her extended hand. "What do *you* think?"

IRON CHIN



BY ROBERT N. BRYAN

AUTHOR OF "FAIR AND WARMER," ETC.

THE KID WITH THE CAST-IRON JAW WAS OUTCLASSED, BUT HE WAS STUBBORN. A JOB ONCE STARTED, HAD TO BE FINISHED.

Iron Chin

COUNTRY folk have the greatest respect for mules. They'll tell you that he who monkeys around a mule had better watch out. Johnny Lane was old enough to know that.

As a matter of fact, Johnny had known it for years. He was twenty and supposed to have sense. But maybe, this bright September morning, Johnny was merely forgetful, or careless, or something. Anyhow, he did a foolish thing.

He was right outside of his father's barn. So was his father's mule. Furthermore, Johnny was now bending over to reach for an apple he'd dropped. The apple had rolled directly back of the mule.

Something got into that mule. Or maybe a horse fly bit her. The cause was never determined. But just as the youthful Johnny bent at the waist, the mule lashed out with her right hind leg. The business end of the hoof caught Johnny ker-plunk on the side of the jaw.

Now, you've heard about guys with a punch "like the kick of a mule." Johnny had, too. But never before had he really found out what the kick of a mule could actually do.

He was knocked over backward. He lit on his rear. For a couple of seconds, his vision was blurred, and his wide blue eyes saw nothing but comets and stars and meteors and bright-colored lights.

But he wasn't knocked out; just dazed. He lurched to his feet, and he blinked those wide blue eyes, and he ran one hand through his tow-colored hair. He felt pretty mad. He wanted to wallop that mule. But he didn't, of course. The "critter" had just been playful, maybe.

Johnny was hoping he hadn't been seen. It was dumb, all right, that stoopin' in back of a mule. Like ask-

ing for trouble. Johnny had asked—and received. Moreover, the act had been witnessed, in spite of his hopes to the contrary.

Back at the house, on the side veranda, two strange men were watching the tow-headed Johnny with bulging eyes.

One of the men was gaping. "Did you see that?" he asked his companion.

The speaker was well in his forties, and gray at the temples. His body was slim, however, and nicely proportioned. He moved with a spring in his step that belied his age.

"I saw it," the other man grunted. "But damned if I really believe it!"

The second speaker was large. His muscles were bunched, his shoulders were broad. He stood six feet one inch.

"Come on," said the first, the smaller and older. "I wanta make sure."

They hurdled the low-porch railing. Johnny, who saw them coming, reddened a trifle. Johnny was nursing a bump on the side of his jaw.

He knew the men by sight, but not by name. They'd come last night, for a little vacation, they'd said. A week in the country. Johnny's parents owned this place, ten miles from town, and had advertised for summer boarders.

Now the summer was practically over. The men who had come last night were the very tag-end of the year's vacationers.

THE smaller man hailed Johnny Lane. "Hiya, there, sonny! Caught your act just now. It was good. But the mule—she cops the decision."

Johnny Lane grinned. "Yeah," he admitted. "I been hit before—but not by a mule."

"Y'mean, ya box a little? I saw some boxin' mags in the house last night."

"A little, yeah. Down at the Legion hall, in town."

The gray-templed man shot a glance

at his rugged companion. Then he returned his gaze to Johnny.

"Listen, kid. My name's Fuzz Bascom. This"—with a nod at the big guy—"this is Tony Martz, a bird I manage. Tony's a heavyweight. Light on the brains, though."

"You mean," exclaimed Johnny excitedly, "you're *the* Fuzz Bascom? The former welterweight champion?"

Bascom spat. "You must 'a' been readin' some books. You certainly couldn't *remember* that far back. Yeah, I reckon I'm him. How old are ya, kid?"

"Twenty," replied Johnny. "As a matter of fact, I'm almost twenty-one."

Bascom eyed him closely. He gave him a rapid appraisal. "Hm-m-m. Good shoulders. Good big forearms. Whaddaya weigh?"

"A hundred and fifty, maybe."

"Yeah? An' y'like to box. Well, look. I saw that mule hang one on your chin. I still can't figure the way y'took it. I think it was faked."

The erstwhile champ with the gray-streaked temples was grinning now.

"But look," he went on, "supposin' you put up your dukes. Ya mind if I spar with ya, just for a minute?"

"W-why," said Johnny, "n-no. I guess I don't."

The kid was amazed, bewildered. What in the devil was up?

"Lemme run into the house," he begged, "an' get my camera. Will ya please? I'd like a picture of this to show the guys in town. They'll never believe me."

"Aw, ferget it," said Bascom dully. "I ain't the welterweight champion now. I ain't been champ for fifteen years. Why, I ain't had on a glove in ten. Your pals never heard of me, probably."

"Yeah, but *I* have," Johnny insisted. Johnny was awed. "I've read—"

"Come on," said Bascom. "Put up your dukes for a minute. Ferget the camera."

Open-mouthed, Johnny obliged. Bascom circled around him. The fellow was lithe for his age.

"Now," said Bascom to Martz, who was standing nearby, "get ready. You catch the lad if he falls. If he *don't* fall, grab him!"

It didn't make sense to Johnny. That is, for a moment. But Bascom was suddenly feinting, then crossing his right. The right hit home with an echoing thud to the point of the youngster's chin.

JOHNNY staggered backward from the unexpected blow. He was stung, was hurt; but he didn't go down. And Johnny was angry, mad as a hornet. His awe had vanished, and rage now gleamed in his eyes. He felt that the man was deliberately showing him up. The low double crosser!

He took a step forward. His brain was reeling, was dizzy; but Johnny was ready to massacre somebody.

"Hold him!" yelled Bascom.

The heavyweight, Martz, came up from behind. He grabbed Johnny's arms, and he pinioned the kid, who was fighting and yelling and kicking. The tow-headed youngster was virtually helpless. He couldn't break loose.

"Calm down, calm down," urged Bascom. "I know it's a little unusual, sure. But all I wanted to do was to see what kind of a button you got. I swear, I couldn't believe you was kicked by a mule an' not *knocked out!*"

"You tell this big gorilla to turn me loose," yelled Johnny.

"I'm tellin' you, kid," pleaded Bascom. "Honest, I meant no harm. I wanted to see, an' I reckon I saw, all right. Now listen. You ever fought fer dough? If not, how'd ya like to try it once, with me as your manager?"

Johnny was sorer than ever. He thought Fuzz Bascom was ribbing him.

"All I'm aimin' to do," yelled Johnny, "is bust you in half as soon as I—"

Bascom pulled out a wallet, extracted

a bill. A crisp new fiver. He waved it at Johnny. "It's yours, fer the poke in the puss. It's a—well, it's a sort of deposit."

The kid's eyes popped. His muscles relaxed. Johnny quit fighting and kicking.

"All right, Martz," said Bascom. "Turn loose of him."

"Y-y-you aren't . . . you aren't *ribbin'* me?" Johnny Lane stammered. He was practically floored from the effects of Bascom's words.

"See here. Wouldya *like* to go into the ring?" asked Bascom.

"*Would* I!" Johnny's reply was almost a whoop. "Why, say, I been hopin' for that ever since I was old enough to—"

Bascom was rather taken aback by the youngster's eagerness, impressed. Bascom wasn't a bad guy, at heart, though admittedly a queer sort of fellow, as befits an ex-boxer.

"Kid," said Bascom, "maybe that jaw's your fortune. It is, if you got anything to go with it. Soon as we leave here, Martz an' me, I'll take you along. I'll get you a bout. We'll see what's what."

BASCOM managed a small stable of fighters, a trio composed of a bantam, a lightweight, and Martz, the heavyweight. Johnny, newly added, constituted a fourth entrant under the Bascom management.

Johnny had no idea how utterly green he looked. His chin was tough, but aside from that the kid appeared to have nothing, except, perhaps, a wild right hand that usually started from somewhere near the floor. He swung from the heels, that's all, and once in a while that roundhouse right connected; but when he missed, he left himself wide open. He didn't know what *defensive* boxing was.

Bascom was grave as he watched him; was sorry, by now, that he'd ever en-

couraged the kid. He knew what an unskilled boxer like Johnny would take in the ring. That hard young chin would receipt for some merciless poundings.

One day while Johnny was training, and missing those roundhouse swings, Fuzz Bascom approached him.

"Look," said Bascom slowly. "Beer, watchin' you work, and I—I'm sorta beginnin' to feel that you better go back



"Remember," said Bascom, "you got two hands, a left and a right. The left's the one you lead with. Also, lemme remind you, boy, you got a head. The head ain't merely an ornament. Use it!"

to the farm fer awhile. Fer yer own good, kid. I made a mistake, I'm 'fraid. Snap judgment. Yeah, I shouldn't—"

"Hell," cut in Johnny. "You get me a fight. By the end of a round, you'll be pattin' yourself on the back for signin' me up."

So Fuzz gave in. He got the kid a bout—a four-round prelim go with a lad as green as Johnny. Fuzz and Tony

Martz were in Johnny's corner. Martz, who had no fights lined up, was glad to help Fuzz Bascom second the kid.

"Remember," said Bascom, "you got two hands, a left and a right. The left's the one you lead with. Also, lemme remind you, boy, you got a head. The head ain't merely an ornament. Use it!"

The gong. Johnny came out of his corner swinging. His rival, a slant-eyed youngster named Polk, was nervous and fidgety. Polk attempted a jab. He missed. But Johnny did, too.

A left caught Johnny's kisser. It failed to shake him. Polk sent five more blows to the body and head. And Johnny, who had no defense, just laughed and plowed in.

The kid from the country swung, missed twice with his right. Polk ducked the punches and countered with hooks to the chin. But Johnny wound up, and he started a wallop from way back home. Lucky, perhaps, but it landed with murderous force on the point of the other man's jaw.

A rousing, echoing *whop*, and Polk went down. The fight was over before it had really begun. They hustled Polk out of the ring and helped him down the aisle on wabby legs.

Johnny, Bascom, and Martz were also leaving he ring. "Now," said Johnny to Fuzz, "I hate to brag, but I told you so!"

"Go down below," said Fuzz, "and see if you hurt that guy. I'll follow y'down in a minute or two. There's a man over here I wanta talk to. Promoter." Bascom turned to Martz. "Tony, you come with me. I may be able to date this bird and line you up for a fight."

Martz followed Bascom.

LEAVING the pair behind, Johnny slung his bathrobe over his shoulders and walked up the aisle that led through the crowd. At the head of the aisle, he found the stairs that led

below to the dressing quarters. The club was only a third-rate dump, and all of the boxers dressed in the same big room, on the floor below.

As Johnny entered the room, he saw young Polk sitting glumly on a bench. Polk looked groggy and sick. But the thing that attracted Johnny's attention first was the sight of another guy standing over Polk and mouthing furious oaths at the beaten fighter.

The loud-mouthed guy was a bird somewhere in his twenties, with jet-black hair, a muscular build, and trim-looking shoulders. He weighed, thought Johnny, a hundred and fifty or more. It was hard to tell, for the mug was attired in street clothes.

"Listen, you quitter," the fellow was saying to Polk, "you're yella, get me? Yella!"

"Aw," Polk muttered, "he tagged me one on the biscuit."

"Yeah, an' what did y'do? Y'quit like a dog!"

The black-haired fellow continued his cursing. He raised one hand. With a sneer of contempt, he slapped Polk's face so hard that the tips of his fingers left splotches. This was too much for Johnny. He crossed the room, laid hold of the fellow in street clothes, and spun him around.

"Lay off!" growled Johnny. "Can't-cha see he's feelin' punk?"

The black-haired tough resented the sudden intrusion. He glared at Johnny with gimlet eyes. Those eyes were dark, like his hair. "Go peddle yer papers," he ordered. "Beat it, buttinski!"

Johnny refused to beat it. Instead, he attempted to shove the fellow away from Polk. Enraged, the tough cut loose with a haymaking punch. But Johnny had seen it, and ducked for a change.

Johnny was sore, by now. He started a blow of his own. A roundhouse right, and the wallop connected. It blasted

the mug on the side of the jaw, and the fellow went toppling backward, losing his balance and sprawling full length.

There was murderous hate in the eyes of the man on the floor. He sprang to his feet with a bellow of rage, and he started for Johnny. But now a trio of half-dressed boxers, awaiting their turns on the evening's program, leaped between the pair and stopped the brawl.

"Save it," one of them warned. "You're breakin' the union rules. When ya fight, be sure you're gonna get *paid* for the job."

The black-haired tough turned to go, but over his shoulder he muttered to Johnny: "You ain't seen the last of me. Next time we meet, you're gonna get your brains beat out!"

With a parting snarl, he left the room.

"Who is that bird?" asked Johnny, addressing his erstwhile rival, Polk.

"Aw, he's a stablemate of mine. Fella named Lou Dillon."

"What was he cussin' you out for?"

"Hell, he bet ten bucks on me tonight. He lost his bet, so he tried to take it out on me, I s'pose. He's a pretty hard nut. Thanks for the helpin' hand."

"Shucks, that was nothin'. An' say, better luck in the ring next time!"

Polk grinned weakly. "Couldn't have very much worse!"

RIGHT about then, Bascom and Martz came in. Bascom took Johnny aside. For a moment, he hesitated. Then, without warming up to the subject, he said:

"Johnny, I've made up my mind. I'm packin' you back to the farm, like I mentioned before. I shouldn't 've ever pulled you out of the weeds, an' I'm free to admit it."

"Wh-what?" gasped Johnny, astounded. "You m-mean you don't wanta *handle* me, after I *won* tonight?"

Johnny was shocked. If the truth were known, he was deeply hurt, and

it wasn't entire pride. He liked Fuzz Bascom.

Bascom knew it, and he rather returned the feeling. A damn good kid, thought Fuzz—a *clean* sort of kid. Maybe too cocky, but decent and square.

That's why Bascom had said what he had, just now. In spite of that victory tonight, he still had a hunch that he'd made a mistake in luring the kid from the farm. Johnny was durable, maybe; but chins have been known to wear out under pounding. The youngster was awkward as hell, and he had no defense. He was green as a pea, but so willing he'd probably get himself massacred, sooner or later.

"Listen," said Bascom, as gently as possible. "You won tonight, I'll grant you that. But you ain't got a thing but a cast-iron jaw."

"I can punch. I won by a knock-out," Johnny said stubbornly.

"Yeah, with a punch so lucky it oughta be drawn in the Irish Sweepstakes. Look, now, kid. I like you. Hell, I don't wanta see ya get butchered. That's why I'm sendin' you home."

"I'm not gonna go," he said obdurately, then walked to his locker.

Bascom stared. He turned to Martz. "What the hell can I do with that kid?" he grunted.

"Why, jus' give 'im the boot, if you don't wanta handle him," Martz replied. "Tell 'im he's only a clumsy, awkward hick an' you ain't got time to fool around with him."

"Aw," said Fuzz, "I hate to be rough on the lad. An' besides, I think I got a better idea. I'll get him a bout with Lefty Krug."

"Lefty Krug? Why, Johnny'll never lay a glove on Krug."

"That's the main idea. Krug can't hit worth a lick, but he's mighty damn clever. He'll throw so many gloves, Johnny'll think it's snowin' leather. He's fast, an' he moves like a streak, an' he'll

have the audience laughin' at Johnny inside of a minute."

"So what?"

"I don't wanta see the kid hurt. Krug can't hurt him, but he *can* show him up so bad that Johnny'll *wanta* get out of the game, if he's got any sense. The youngster's all puffed up, after winnin' tonight. But when Krug gets through with him—" Bascom shrugged. He spread his hands. "It'll teach the kid a lesson."

"Fuzz," said Martz, "you're a pretty smart guy. But if I know Johnny, you're barkin' up the wrong tree, this time. It won't work out. Johnny's too stubborn."

Fuzz thought differently.

TWO weeks later, Johnny was sitting in his corner at another little fight club. Bascom had matched him with Lefty Krug, a clever but light-hitting southpaw. Fuzz and Martz were seconding Johnny again.

The bout had not yet started. Johnny was there in the ring, but Krug had not appeared. He was still downstairs.

The crowd was calling for action. Johnny had been on his stool for a good ten minutes. The bout was late.

A bathrobed fighter came striding along the aisle. He slipped through the ropes, followed at once by some handlers. The crowd settled back. But not Fuzz Bascom, nor Martz, nor Johnny.

"H-hey!" exclaimed Fuzz. "*That ain't* Lefty Krug!"

It wasn't, indeed, as Johnny himself had instantly noted. But Johnny was grinning. The man in the opposite corner had jet-black hair, and jet-black eyes that glinted. The man was the fellow that Johnny had clouted two weeks ago in the dressing quarters after the bout with Polk!

"What's comin' off around here?" Bascom roared. "*That ain't* Krug.

That's Lou Dillon! He's one of the toughest prelim boys in town. Why, hell, he'll murder Johnny Lane!"

Right about then, the club promoter showed up.

"Look, Fuzz," he pleaded. "Krug took sick just now in the dressin' room. Dillon was hangin' around, and he offered to sub. He weighs the same as your man here."

"Nothin' doin'!" Bascom snapped. "It's out. He's too damn tough fer Johnny. I know that guy!"

But Johnny was grinning, still. He recalled what Dillon had said, that night two weeks ago: "You ain't seen the last of me. Next time we meet, you're gonna get your brains beat out!"

And Johnny didn't believe that the "meeting" tonight had happened by chance. Dillon had probably framed this thing with Krug. Had probably paid Krug off, so that Krug would arrange to get sick the night of the bout. Dillon was willing, no doubt, to box for little or nothing, if it would give him a crack at Johnny.

Bascom was saying: "It's off, I tell ya. If Krug ain't ready, we'll cancel!"

But Johnny laid hold of the manager's arm. "We'll cancel *nothin'!*" said Johnny. "We'll fight. It's a breeze. This Dillon—I knocked the guy on his tail one time. I'll do it again!"

"You *what?*" yipped Bascom. "What in the hell are y'talkin' about?"

So Johnny told him.

"W-why," gasped Fuzz, "you never mentioned—"

"I reckon I didn't," interrupted Johnny. "I sort of forgot at the time, I guess."

"You mean . . . you mean you actually *floored* this Dillon?" asked Fuzz. "Why, that guy's *good.*"

"I don't give a damn if he's champ," snapped Johnny. "I'll fight him tonight. And I'll lick him. An' say, if y'can't stand the sight of red, you better get yourself some smellin' salts!"

SO Fuzz shut up. He saw he was wasting his breath; that his protests to Johnny were futile. The kid was determined to fight, and if Bascom said "No," the kid'd fight anyhow.

"All right, Johnny," Fuzz muttered. "Go on an' do your stuff. You brought this on yourself."

Bascom hoped that the end would come quickly and painlessly.

Clang, clang, clang! The gong requested attention. The club announcer informed the crowd of the substitution. Dillon, not Krug, versus Lane. The weights, one-fifty pounds. The bout, four rounds.

The ref called both men out and gave them their orders. The fighters returned to their corners. They shuffled their feet in the resin. Then, the sound of the gong once more. The bout was on.

Dillon came out with a pantherish glide. His eyes were narrow, and cold with the lust of the killer. But Dillon wanted to talk before he started to work.

"I ain't forgotten," he sneered at Johnny. "I told ya I'd see ya again. An' I told ya I'd batter yer brains out. Well, here goes!"

He jabbed a left to the chin, and he followed it up with a couple of trip-hammer rights to the nose. Johnny, wide open, was easily hit, and presented a beautiful target. Another stiff punch to the nose, and a trickle of claret appeared.

Johnny replied with his favorite tactics—a rush and a swing for the head. It missed by a mile, and it left him wide open again and completely off balance. Dillon came in with a blow to the heart, then brought up his right in a dynamite hook to the point of the chin.

That wallop exploded with staggering force. It was perfectly timed, and it landed so hard that it knocked Johnny's mouthpiece flying. The kid's eyes popped, went suddenly glassy. Two

more of those rights to the jaw put him down on his knees.

He was stunned, and his mind was awlirl. He was seeing those lights that he'd seen when the mule had cut loose on him. But, as his knees hit the deck, he refused to go down any farther. The youngster was hurt, but he wasn't quite out.

There must have been steel in his jawbone, along with the iron. And something far tougher than steel in his heart. For he lurched to his feet, and he stumbled awkwardly forward, his eyes still glazed, his brain still fogged. But he didn't go into a clinch.

His instinct now was to pay the other guy back for that trip to the floor. He swung with his left, and his right, and he missed both times. His punches lacked steam; he was flailing the air. But the kid was in there shootin' the works as best he knew.

CALMLY, Dillon measured him; hit him three times in rapid succession, without a return. But Johnny kept boring in hard, kept taking those punches. He took two more, and one of them, flush on the mouth, put a gash in his lip. He was getting cut up in the opening minute.

And Dillon? Well, Dillon was having the time of his life. His crafty eyes were glittering. Malice and viciousness showed in his face. He had cruelty written all over him. He was one of those fighters who love to give punishment, just for the fun of it.

Johnny took plenty, that opening round. His cheeks were lumpy, his eyes half closed. It wasn't until late in the round that his head really cleared. When it did, he finally landed a hard right swing to his enemy's temple, and Dillon stepped back. That blow to the temple had power, though badly controlled. It taught Lou Dillon respect, for a moment.

But only a moment. Craftily, Dillon

maneuvered, and Johnny rushed in wide open, as always. Dillon shot over a left, then crossed with his right to the jaw.

Splat! It connected. And Johnny went down. That punch would have toppled an ox.

Johnny was bleary again, in his mind. The count reached "five." The kid didn't hear it. But something inside kept telling him not to stay down. He oughta be up on his feet. He was sure of that, somehow.

He pulled to his knees, and he tottered erect. And then, when Dillon charged, the kid remembered. Sure. That dark-haired guy with the cold, hard eyes—

The face was a face that Johnny disliked. So he braced his feet and swung from the heels. He missed that punch, and he took two blows to the body and one to the head. Dillon was trying to put him away in the last few seconds preceding the gong.

But this time, Johnny stayed up. The tow-headed youngster was still on his feet, and was throwing both mitts, at the end of the round.

He sank to his stool. Almost immediately, Bascom produced the ammonia. The shock of it stiffened the fighter, and cleared away some of the cobwebs.

Johnny looked up at his manager, grinned. "To hell with the perfume!" said Johnny. "Give it to Dillon. He'll need it. Why, say, I'm just gettin' warm. I'll take 'im this round!"

Fuzz said nothing. The fight had three more rounds to go—if it lasted that long. Fuzz was wishing the whole damned thing was over.

THOSE next three rounds, on the whole, were legalized butchery. Johnny's face was smeared with red, and his body was covered with deep welts where the flailing gloves of the other man punished him. Johnny was frequently groggy and dazed.

Yet Johnny was taking it. Johnny had not been knocked to the floor since the opening round. He was hurt, he was cut, he was bruised; but he stubbornly, doggedly, kept himself vertical, soaking up punches.

That cast-iron chin was pulling him through. Or *was* it the chin?

Nobody there in the crowd would have blamed him for quitting; but somehow, the kid was too stubborn to quit. A job was a job. Once started, it had to be finished.

Dillon was angry by now, and the longer the fight went on, the angrier Dillon became. He had thought to finish the tow-headed kid in the opening round. But Johnny was still in the ring when the fourth came around, and was still on his feet. And was able to talk.

"Dillon," said Johnny, in one of the flurries, "you're gonna get whupped. You're bustin' your hands on my head, an' I'm likin' it, see? I'm too tough for ya!"

Dillon replied, in a clinch, by heeling young Johnny then sneaking a rabbit punch.

Johnny was finally doing some thinking. "I'm dumb. Been dumb all along. I gotta use sense. Bascom likes fighters with brains!"

His eyes had shifted now to Dillon's jaw. He took three blows to the head, and one of them well-nigh floored him; but, as he planted his feet and braced himself and refused to go down, his eyes sought Dillon's chin once more.

Dillon was watching, was raising his guard. He did it by instinct. Johnny was feinting his left, creating an opening, using a trick he had never attempted before. The left pawed out in a feint at the chin, and Dillon's guard went up still farther. And then, like a thunderbolt, Johnny came in with his right.

That wild-swinging right with a bomb on the end of it. Dillon was open from waist to neck, for he expected a punch to the head. Dillon was fooled.

The right thudded home. Too late, Dillon hinged. A yell from the crowd. Johnny had nailed him; had buried that winging right mitt in the folds of the belly; had buried it clean to the wrist.

Lou Dillon pitched forward. He sagged to his knees. Dillon was hurt; he was gasping for breath. His face was twitching; his mouth was working convulsively.

Dillon got up at the count of eight. Instantly, Johnny was after him; doubled him up with another hard right to the stomach. Johnny was whaling the body, instead of the button. The pantry was larger, and offered an easier target. He might miss, if he swung for the biscuit.

Johnny eluded a clinch. He shoved Dillon off; missed twice with his left. But his right came thundering home once more to the pit of the stomach—a pile-driving wallop that almost tore Dillon in half.

And Dillon went sprawling full length!

JOHNNY retired to a corner. A grim, set snarl was painted in red on his lips. On the canvas, Dillon, his opponent, was writhing.

"I c-can't g-go on," the fallen boxer gasped. He rolled on his side, and his beady black eyes, now drawn with pain, looked up at the ref.

He finally twisted his body, attempted to crawl to his corner. With a glance of contempt at the man on the floor, the ref stepped over to Johnny and hoisted his mitt. But the ref's contempt was perhaps unfair. Lou Dillon *couldn't* go on.

Out in the smoky arena, the fans were yelling their heads off; were limp from excitement. But Johnny heard none of it. Johnny had turned, and his snarl had vanished. Now he was waiting for Fuzz, who was clambering up through the ropes.

"How did y'like it?" the kid said eagerly. "How did I look? And say, if Dillon wants a return bout, I'll take him on whenever he's ready."

"What the hell can y'do with a kid like that?" Fuzz Bascom groaned. "I'm askin' the world: What the hell can y'do with a kid like that?"

"I'm stickin' around," chuckled Johnny. "I'm gonna keep fightin'—"

"I s'pose there ain't no talkin' you out of it," Bascom sighed resignedly. "Hell, you're worse'n a bur, and it looks like I gotta put up with you."

Bascom suddenly smiled. "So I reckon I'll take y'in hand, an' teach y'some tricks that'll save you from gettin' yer head stove in, perhaps. But I'll never claim credit fer makin' a fighter out of you, Johnny. You're *that* already!"

APPEAL



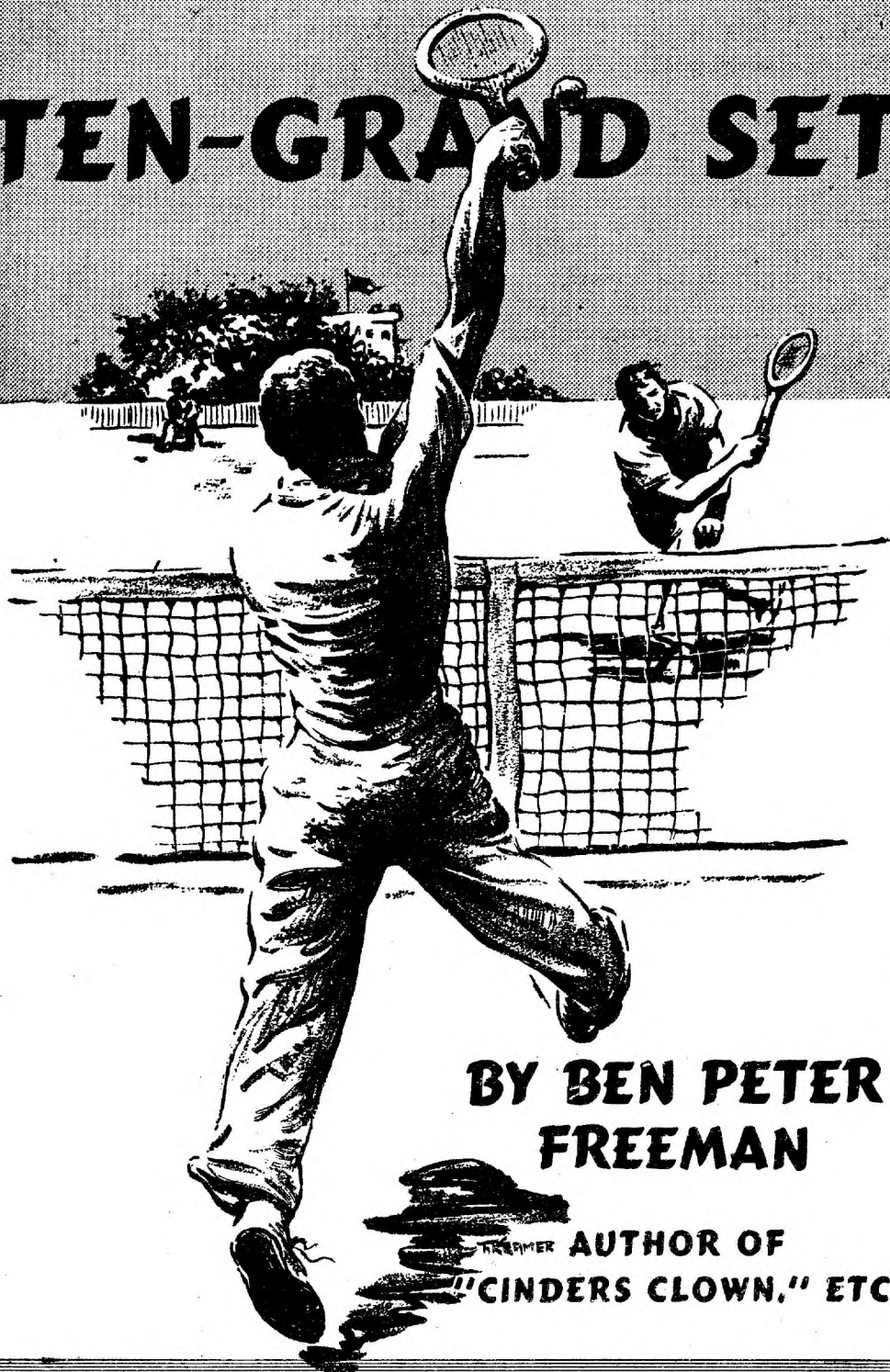
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TEN-GRAND SET



**BY BEN PETER
FREEMAN**



**AUTHOR OF
"CINDERS CLOWN," ETC.**

DUSTY DEAN REFUSED TO TAKE LIFE SERIOUSLY. THINGS CAME HIS WAY TOO EASY, AND THEN, HE FOUND HIMSELF AT THE CROSSROADS.

Ten-grand Set

IT was very clear that the big champ, on the other side of the net, did not relish the treatment he was getting from Dusty Dean. An impish grin splitting his thin, tanned face, Dusty was pouring it on with his racket, and pouring it on vocally.

The big champ slid on the base line to his forehand corner, glowered as he laid it all on a booming drive along the line to pass Dusty, who was streaking for the net.

The great gallery gasped. It was foolhardy to rush the net against the champion's murderous passing shots. But Dusty Dean had been doing just this through three hair-raising sets. Rushing the net, pasting the champ's blistering drives back into the big guy's puss—and getting away with it.

Past mid-court, Dusty spun on a dime and threw himself lunging. His bat head volleyed the zooming ball, angled it sharply across-court to the alley line, just clearing the net. And Cal Torrey, pounding furiously for the "get," blew to his knees as the ball ghosted out of court three feet before him.

The fourteen thousand fans in the famed West Side Tennis Club stadium exploded to their feet with a roar, and the umpire barked:

"Game, Mr. Dean. He leads, five games to four, third set. Sets are one—all."

The great gallery roared again. They still didn't expect Dusty Dean, the cheerful in-and-outer of amateur tennis, to conquer Cal Torrey in this national-singles championship. Torrey was the Wimbledon champion, twice American champion. And a juicy pro offer was hanging on the line for Torrey after this match.

But the gallery liked the sparely made, bouncing Dusty Dean, who was always grinning, who always shot the works, who never seemed to care a damn

whether he won or lost. And the fans could never get too fond of the sneering, arrogantly confident Torrey.

So they yelled for Dusty Dean, and Dusty, picking himself up from that last nose dive into the turf, grinned back at them; grinned wide at Cal Torrey as they changed courts.

"What's the matter, champ?" Dusty chuckled. "You ain't got the old *umph* in there today."

They couldn't hear Dusty's words in the stands, but they saw Cal Torrey half stop and scowl, then stride on stiffly, and they laughed. The little guy was kidding the big champ again. The little guy was giving the champ the needles! They laughed some more.

Cal Torrey's heavy-featured face was dark as he turned to receive Dusty's service. Cal Torrey wasn't used to laughter from the stands, and Dusty Dean chuckled again.

"Can't take a little ribbin', eh, champ? O. K., fella, how do you like these apples?"

Dusty served quickly, his shoulders slung smoothly behind his lashing arm, bat head exploding through to powder the ball as his wrist whip-snapped.

An unspectacular service gesture, but the white pill blurred the dust to line at the center corner, and Dusty was on the net in a rush to salt away Torrey's hard-blocked return.

He blazed another service across, twisting sharper this time, and Torrey's stab return was a high bumping lob.

Dusty arched into the sun before the center line, jackknifed off the ground as his bat crashed down to smash the ball, to flatten it in the turf behind Torrey, from where it bounced high, soaring into the stands.

The gallery beat their hands. The umpire's voice, holding carefully controlled surprise, called, "Thirty—love!" and Dusty said, "Ain't we havin' fun?"

DUSTY DEAN always had fun when he was hot, when he was on his game, and when he wasn't too tired. And particularly did he have fun when he had a sourpuss like this champ on the receiving end of his shots.

Dusty Dean, who played tennis for the hell of it, didn't go for sourpusses like the champ, who played tennis as if the fate of the world depended on it. And for no particular reason, Dusty Dean had never cottoned to Cal Torrey. He was going to have more fun today, knocking off this cocky champ.

Dusty called polifely across the net, "Ready, sweetheart?" And when Cal Torrey glowered, Dusty laughed again and pulled the cork for a scorching service ace. He softened the next service, caught Torrey flat-footed, smacked lime from the back line as he leaned behind a swinging backhand.

The umpire waited for the thunder of the stands to die down. Then he announced:

"Game, and third set to Mr. Dean, six games to four. Mr. Dean now leads, two sets to one."

Dusty walked to the dressing room for the intermission with Mike Martin, the country's No. 1 professional player. Mike Martin's father, a former Davis Cup coach, had taught Dusty how to swing his first racket. Mike was six years older than Dusty, but there was a deep bond of friendship between them.

Now Mike Martin said: "Nice going, kid. But why do it the hard way? Taking Cal Torrey is a man-size job any day. Gettin' him sore is the same as monkeying with dynamite."

Dusty laughed. "That big shot Torrey gets in my hair," he retorted. "He's licked me eight times, and every time he's had a wisecrack for me. This is my day to howl."

"It's your party," Mike agreed. "I'm just warning you. Anyhow, I hope you knock him off, so he'll listen to reason.

I wouldn't make any dough touring the pro circuit with Cal Torrey."

"How come?" Dusty asked, surprised. "I hear Torrey will get fifty grand. You'll get at least half that, won't you?"

"In a pig's ear," Mike Martin retorted ruefully. "This guy Torrey is a slick apple. He's held off turning pro for two years, waiting for the public to get tired watching me. So now he says he'll condescend to play with me, if he gets seventy percent of the gate. And after the promoter takes his cut—"

"The dirty hog" Dusty gasped.

"A hog is Santa Claus alongside that Torrey cutie," Martin grunted. "I'll have to play him for coffee and cake."

Dusty's snub nose wrinkled sympathetically, and then he grinned, slapped Mike Martin's long back.

"Forget it," Dusty ordered. "When I finish cuttin' that guy down to his right size, he'll come crawling to you to listen to reason."

"Attaboy," Mike Martin replied, but he didn't look at Dusty, and his voice didn't hold much conviction.

RIGHT then, Dusty colored. He knew what Mike was thinking—that Dusty Dean had on several occasions led a top-ranking opponent two sets to one, and then, when the pressure was on, Dusty had said, "To hell with it," and folded.

But today, Dusty decided grimly, it was going to be different. He was getting a big kick out of pinning down Cal Torrey's cocky ears. And now it would be a double pleasure, since he would be able to do Mike Martin a good turn at the same time.

Dusty opened up fast in the fourth set. After two sharp rallies, he was able to run out the game, and the fans took up their clamor for him where they had left off before the intermission.

But with the second game, with Cal Torrey serving, Dusty, and the crowd,

too, sensed a change of tactics on the part of the big defending champion. Instead of blazing for the lines, instead of the thunderous passing shots off both his forehand and backhand, Cal Torrey suddenly softened, and *lengthened* his game.

Cal Torrey began to serve a longer ball, and he freighted it with spin. Not so fast, but hanging lower and twisting over the turf, and Dusty had to take it deeper. That slowed him a split second in starting his rush to the net.

Then, instead of trying to murder a passing shot post the lean kid driving for the net, Cal Torrey lobbed. When Dusty pivoted and raced back for the lob, smashed and dug for the net again, Cal Torrey chased him back for another lob.

Cal Torrey won his service to square the set, and when Dusty went back to serve, he was breathing a little hard. He held his service, but he had to do a lot of running.

Torrey went on lobbing in the fourth game, passing up opportunities for kill placements to chase Dusty back to the base line for perfectly executed lobs, or to run him across-court and back again for controlled, raking shots to the alley lines.

Stubbing the line to begin service in the fifth game, Dusty was panting, and there was the beginning of an ache in his back and shoulders, a weariness in his legs. He double-faulted for the first time in the match; and then, seeing a thin smile wreath Cal Torrey's fleshy lips, Dusty knew a quick anger.

Torrey thought Dusty was pooping out, did he? *All right, wise guy, get your bat on this one!* Dusty whaled down on that service, was halfway to the net when the linesman called "Out!"

Torrey chopped the next service into the backhand corner, and another long rally ensued. Finally Dusty overdrove the line.

THAT ache was sharp in his back now. It made his shoulder muscles draw, disturbed the smooth-powered timing of his service. So he swore softly, took a pinch of fire from his serves. Then he had to lay back there on the base line and swap drives.

The stands, sensing the new element in this duel—the canny, brutal efforts of the champion to wear down his brash challenger—went silently tense. So that you could hear the *beat-beat* of Dusty Dean's weary feet pounding the turf; hear him wheezing.

And when he had dropped that game to Torrey, and then dropped his own service for the first time in the match, and as he felt his heart thunder in his chest and heard the blood in his ears, Dusty growled:

"The dirty son outfoxed me. O. K., he can have this set. I'll get him in the big one."

So Dusty Dean slowed down, pulled to ease his legs and breathing, let Cal Torrey run out the set and square the match. And the stands stirred knowingly, disappointedly then.

Cal Torrey was smiling mockingly, as he prepared to serve in the fifth set. The set which would decide the singles champion of the United States. And this time, Dusty Dean forbore kidding the champ, in order to save his breath.

And then the long duels began again, and Dusty found the eased respite hadn't put the spring back into his game, hadn't returned the flexible power to his wrist. His heavy legs refused to pound him up to the net fast enough, and so again he had to lay back in deep court and slog it out with Cal Torrey.

Dusty, as his speed went, reached them late, and so he overdrove consistently.

The umpire droned: "Game, Mr. Torrey. He leads, two games to love."

And a little later: "Game, Mr. Torrey. He leads, three games."

And this time, there was an edge of

disappointment in the umpire's voice. Disappointment in the stands, too, where the long, unspectacular rallies were applauded listlessly. A strange look in Mike Martin's eyes as he watched from the stands.

Dusty panted, "What is this, a game or a dog fight?" And the old feeling of futility, of outworn pleasure, came back to haunt him. He was fagged, pooped. His heart was bursting out of his chest, and his racket weighed a ton. He didn't play tennis to tear his guts out.

He chased back for another perfect lob, stumbled and fell on his face. He was sore when he got up. Sore at himself. Sure, he wanted to lick this punk Torrey. But what difference if he didn't? Dusty didn't want to turn pro; he played tennis for fun.

As for Mike Martin—well, Dusty was due to inherit ten thousand dollars a day after tomorrow, on his twenty-third birthday. If Mike needed dough, Dusty would help him out.

Again the umpire droned wearily: "Game, Mr. Torrey. He leads, five games to one." And the fans began to walk out of the stands.

CAL TORREY'S smile was a wolfish gloat, and Dusty groaned and tried once more. But there was a pinkish haze before his eyes, and he thought he was going to pass out. He said numbly, "To hell with it," and let it go.

Dusty had his old grin on with his sweater as he went through the news-reel pictures and cup presentation; but oddly, he didn't want to see Mike Martin just then. So he skipped the clubhouse, and went to the street where his uncle's car awaited him.

Nicholas Dean, who was the twin brother of Dusty's dead father, had the typical spare, wiry build of all the Deans, the same fine-boned, snub-nosed face.

Now Nicholas Dean said: "Tough luck, losing that match, son."

Dusty shrugged. "The old case of a good big man licking a good little man," he answered lightly.

Nicholas Dean frowned. "Dean isn't much bigger than you. Maybe two inches taller, a few pounds heavier."

"Oh, well," said Dusty, "that's ancient history. I've had enough tennis for a while. I think I'll buy a new car and take a trip to the coast."

"What will you use for money?" his uncle asked dryly.

"The ten thousand dollars you're going to give me on my birthday, a day after tomorrow," Dusty replied promptly.

Nicholas Dean looked suddenly stern and unhappy. "I'm not giving you that ten thousand yet, Dusty," he said quietly.

Dusty laughed. "You're a great kidder, Uncle Nick."

"I'm not kidding, son," Nicholas Dean said painfully. "Your father's will appointed me the trustee of your estate. And according to that will, if in my opinion you aren't worthy of inheriting that ten thousand on your twenty-third birthday, I can withhold it."

Dusty's eyes popped. "Worthy?" he repeated. "Well, I—"

"In my opinion, you aren't worthy of that money, which means of your father's trust," Nicholas Dean said sharply. "Your father was a fighter. A kind man, but one who was willing to fight for what he wanted. You . . . you're a quitter."

Dusty paled. He said: "Take it easy, Uncle Nick. Just because I saw no reason to kill myself in that match today—"

"That's just it," his uncle cut in. "When things get too tough, you quit. You've got to have everything handed to you on a silver platter. Well, you're going to find out what it means to work, to fight for what you want."

Dusty held himself in check, made his voice light. "So I'm to go out and con-

quer the cold, cold world, eh?" he asked. "Just like in the storybooks."

"You get the idea," his uncle said evenly. "And I would suggest that you start out with the tennis world."

Dusty Dean was sore. He sold his old roadster and took his trip to the coast. He lazied around out there, waiting for his uncle to stop "bluffing." When his uncle wrote politely, but firmly, that he *wasn't* bluffing, Dusty came back East on his last dollar.

He decided that he wouldn't give his uncle the pleasure of refusing him a loan. What had the old goat said? "I would suggest that you start making good in the tennis world."

AND so, Dusty grinned sourly and went to Mike Martin to see what Mike could do for him with his professional troupe.

Mike Martin said: "The tour opens next week, in the Garden. Maybe I can get you on as my doubles partner. You'll just about be able to live on your salary, but it might do some—"

Mike stopped, and Dusty, knowing that Mike had been about to say that earning a hard living might do Dusty some good, said gruffly:

"Never mind the sermon, Mike. Get me the job."

So Mike Martin went to bat with Tex Hearn, the boss of the pro-tennis troupe, and Hearn objected.

"This Dean is a playboy," Hearn said. "And the way he flopped against Torrey—"

"Dusty Dean is my pal," Mike Martin said firmly. "And he's a helluva good tennis player. I'm not making any money out of this tour anyhow. For two pins, I'd quit."

So Tex Hearn capitulated, if grudgingly, but Cal Torrey raised the roof.

"I don't want that wisenheimer in my troupe!" he stormed. "He's no tennis player, and besides—"

"And besides," interrupted Dusty

Dean, coming into the office just then with Mike Martin, "I might get the gallery laughin' at you again, eh?"

Cal Torrey said no more, but the glare he gave Dusty Dean was eloquent; and going out with Dusty, Mike Martin said wryly, "You sure like to lead with your chin, don't you, kid? You ought to know by now that this Torrey b y is bad medicine."

Dusty said musedly: "He's a little afraid of me. He knows, the next time I get him on a court, maybe—"

Mike laughed. "Kid, you're talking through your hat."

Tex Hearn's professional troupe opened their widely publicized tour in the Garden before a packed house, and Cal Torrey and Mike Martin put on a rousing five-set scrap. A scrap which Torrey captured after a thrice-deuced final set.

"The guy is good," Dusty grugged. "He's kept in shape."

Dusty went out to team with Mike Martin in a doubles match against Cal Torrey and his chunky partner, Bruce.

Dusty had played indoor tennis before. On boards, which take practically no spin at all. But Tex Hearn's troupe carried their own especially constructed composition surface, and Dusty, who had signed with Hearn too late for practice, found that this special court surface *took spin*, and plenty of it.

Dusty found himself floundering, overrunning the balls, or stroking too late as he sought to gauge and solve this tricky court. And seeing him flounder, Cal Torrey smiled broadly and unleashed a furious assault on Dusty Dean.

AFTER only three games, Dusty was sweating like a horse. They began to hoot at him from the gallery, and overanxious, Dusty began to press, and he became wilder than a hawk.

"Take it easy," Mike Martin clucked, and tried to carry the attack, to cover up

for Dusty. But Jiggs Bruce, taking orders from his champion partner, was converging to the attack upon Dusty now, and the spare, bouncing guy began to lose his grin.

The whole upper gallery was jeering Dusty in the second set, and he began to wheeze again. He hadn't played a great deal of tennis in the past few months, and he was fighting to stay on his feet now as well as to make his shots.

And then it was over at last, and Dusty went to the dressing room with his ears burning. Cal Torrey laughed a lot in the dressing room, cracked about "that punk Dean busting up again," and Mike Martin held Dusty forcibly under the shower until Dean promised not to come out and try to sock Cal Torrey.

It was almost as bad in Boston, where, after beating Mike Martin again in the feature singles, Cal Torrey, laughing hugely, led another fierce assault upon Dusty in the doubles.

Again the gallery hooted and catcalled at Dusty, and again Dusty went to the dressing room with his ears red. He came out of the shower still bristling, and when Cal Torrey sneered, "If I didn't think your puss was so funny, I'd take pity on you and pull my shots, Dean," Dusty was leaping for him.

He slipped on the wet concrete just in front of Cal Torrey, and the big champion, grunting with pleasure, slammed him against a locker with a vicious hook to the jaw.

Dusty came up dazedly, mouthing harshly and making for Torrey again. But this time, Mike Martin had his arms wrapped around Dusty and was swearing at him softly when Tex Hearn stamped in.

"Cut that out, Dean!" the pro-tennis boss commanded. "You're causing me enough troubles out there on the court. Any more of this funny stuff, and contract or no contract, you're out on your ear. Get me?"

Mike Martin had Dusty off in a corner, talking to him, and pretty soon Dusty came back to his locker and climbed quietly into his clothes. Right there, Dusty Dean began to think—

THEY had two days in Philadelphia before the matches, and each afternoon Dusty and Mike Martin went to the Hall and practiced.

Dusty got the feel of the special surfacing then, and in the next doubles match, after Mike Martin had defeated Cal Torrey, Dusty did a better job in holding up his end.

But Dusty tired in the third set, and in Pittsburgh he spent the morning before the matches in a gym, pedaling the stationary bicycle, trotting doggedly around the track. And he kept on doing that in Cleveland, in Chicago, in Denver.

Near the end of the first lap of the circuit, Dusty was playing a hell-for-leather game alongside Mike Martin in the doubles matches, and Cal Torrey, frowning displeasably, began playing for the points instead of playing Dusty Dean.

And when Cal Torrey wisecracked in the dressing rooms, Dusty let it ride. Only his jaw hardened—and his eyes. Dusty had a mission these days. Something to shoot for. There were long periods in which he actually forgot all about the ten thousand dollars his uncle Nick was holding out on him.

The first break—the break which was to develop into a boomerang—came in Chicago, after the troupe had worked its way across the country to the coast, and was now headed back East. In Chicago, Cal Torrey got off the train with a heavy cold, and the trainer ordered him to bed for two days.

Tex Hearn tore his hair. "Whatta we do now?" he railed. "The Stadium here sold out for the show, and Cal in bed. And just when I get a chance to get some of my money back—"

Mike Martin said quickly: "Let Dusty fill in for Cal."

"Dusty?" howled Hearn. "Are you nuts? After his flopperoo against Torrey in the nationals? After the way he started on this tour? They'll chase us out of town!"

Mike Martin shrugged. "You're the doctor," he said. "But don't forget Dusty ranked fourth in the country this year. And his game has improved. He'll give me a battle."

So Tex Hearn grumbled, and then he said he'd try it. The Stadium crowd hollered protestingly when the announcement came that Dusty Dean would play for Cal Torrey against the professional champion, Mike Martin.

But when the crowd was told that their money would be refunded if they weren't satisfied with the match, they quieted down. And after the first two games, they forgot all about their protest.

WITH the first played ball, it was apparent that this was going to be a match. Lean, raw-boned Mike Martin grinned at Dusty Dean.

"This is for keeps, kid," Mike said, and fired a scorching service ace past Dusty's waving racket.

Dusty said, "Uh-huh," and grinned back. He was on the next service as it broke from the court, leaned on a flat backhand to Mike's backhand corner, and the duel was on.

Dusty had played tennis with Mike Martin since they were both kids. He knew every phase of Mike's game, as Mike knew every phase of Dusty's game. And so the match developed into a beautiful battle of wits, with each player on the ball like a hawk, stabbing, fencing, driving to pull the other out of position.

Dusty's grin was flashing again. This was fun, having a hard opponent across the net again, and he, Dusty, alone in

his court. The occasional singles exhibitions he had put on with Jiggs Bruce were no fun. Bruce was essentially a doubles player.

And so now, with the score of that first set mounting to 5—all, 6—all, 7—all, and the crowd roaring behind them, Dusty was having fun again. He forgot about the weeks of humiliation, of nasty ragging he had taken from Cal Torrey.

In the fifteenth game he pulled Martin out of position with a drop shot, then heard the fans roar as he drove a placement along the line which fairly burned the court. And then he held his own service to run out the first set.

Mike Martin said, "Nice goin', rooster," and proceeded to pull the plug all the way out in that second set. It was a brilliantly fought, ding-dong set, which Mike finally put away at 7—5. And there wasn't a good voice left in the gallery.

It was in the third set that Dusty noticed that Mike Martin was tiring. Some of the sting was gone from the professional champ's service, and he was a shaded split second slowed in covering court.

Dusty thought for a sympathetic moment: "Mike is getting old. I oughta let down."

But when he tried to let down, Mike met him at the net. "This is the money game," Mike Martin said sharply. "In this game you shoot the works. Where the hell do you think you are—back there playing for the pretty debutantes?"

Dusty flushed then, went back and applied the pressure. His younger legs were good enough to beat Mike's older gams. Dusty ran out the third set and match at 6—4.

The next night, with Cal Torrey still in bed at the hotel, they went over to Evanston and repeated the performance. Dusty won easier this time, 5—7, 7—5, 6—1.

The papers gave these results a big

play, and Dusty, seeing his grinning face in the sports sheets, was about to mail the papers to his uncle Nick with a suggestion that Nicholas Dean mail ten grand herewith.

And then Dusty threw the papers and the half-written letter aside. To hell with the ten grand! He had only *started* his job. And, he suspected shrewdly, Uncle Nick would think that, too.

Dusty said: "I'll go see Tex Hearn now. He'll have to match me with Cal Torrey. I've earned that right."

And then the boomerang struck.

THEY were on the train to Cleveland, and Dusty was about to seek out Tex Hearn, when Mike Martin dropped down in Dusty's seat with the morning papers. Mike's face was very long.

Mike said, "Look," dolefully, and pointed at a streamer on a sports page above pictures of Mike himself and Dusty Dean. The streamer read:

MARTIN ACCUSED OF THROWING MATCHES TO DEAN!

Dusty strangled an exclamation and grabbed the page. The story read:

Cal Torrey, last year's world's amateur tennis champion, and winner of twenty-four matches out of thirty-five with Mike Martin, professional champion, accuses Martin of deliberately letting down in his last two spectacular defeats by Dusty Dean. Martin knows he's washed up for next year, asserts Torrey, and he laid down to Dean. They figure to build up Dean, who is distinctly a second-rate player, so he can play with me next year. My guess is that Dean and Martin figure to split Dean's take.

Dusty dropped the papers and started to slide out of his seat. His eyes were slitted rage.

He said hoarsely: "That guy has had this comin' for a long time. When I get through with him—"

But Mike Martin grabbed him,

jammed him down. "Hold it, you dope," growled Mike. "The rough stuff won't do us any good. We're in a jam. We've gotta think, and think fast!"

"But, Mike—"

"Save it," Mike grunted. "That dirty story has blown the rest of this tour higher than a kite. That's O. K. with Torrey; he's already drawn his guarantee. But Tex Hearn and I take the rap. We were to get our cut from the rest of the tour."

That stopped Dusty. He murmured helpless sympathy. He knew how it was with Mike. How Mike, knowing nothing of investments, had lost the big fruits of his earnings in a rash speculation. And how he had scrimped and saved the last two years, trying to get a stake to buy an indoor courts and school layout he yenned for.

And now, Mike was stuck for his dough this year—stuck by that punk Cal Torrey! Dusty leaped into the aisle again. "I'm gonna get that guy right now."

"He's not even on this train," Mike Martin said wearily. "He's not so dumb. Tex called the tour off when this story broke."

Mike smiled wryly. "You called the turn right, kid. Torrey pulled this trick so he wouldn't ever have to play you. Damn if I know why. He licked you nine times. But maybe you're right, and he thinks you're the one guy who *might* lick him."

Dusty Dean knew bitterness then on that train. Cal Torrey, by a clever, dirty ruse, had cheated Dusty of his chance at a pay-off match with the champion. And at the same time, Torrey had spiked Mike Martin's wagon. Mike was only twenty-nine; but burning the courts all over the world for eleven years had taken its toll of Mike's legs. Mike was through with the money game.

And it was his, Dusty's fault, Dusty Dean told himself. Mike had wangled him this job with the troupe. Mike

would have got through this tour if he hadn't been so honest as to force Dusty to shoot the works and trim him in those two matches.

It was not until the train was pulling into Grand Central that Dusty got his fool idea. And then he smiled—Smiled grimly, and grabbed a cab for his uncle's house.

Nicholas Dean listened soberly to his nephew's story. He sat quietly for a long moment after Dusty had finished, his eyes keenly appraising on Dusty's face. And then Nicholas Dean held out his hand.

"O. K., son," he said simply. "It's a deal."

And then Dusty hotfooted it to the newspapers.

CAL TORREY couldn't back out of that match, even if he wanted to. Not with every big sports page in the country featuring Dusty Dean's challenge to play Cal Torrey a five-set match in Madison Square Garden for a side bet of ten thousand dollars!

Dusty challenged Torrey to back up his sneer that Dean was "only a second-rate player." And Dusty Dean charged that Cal Torrey was a liar in claiming that Mike Martin had thrown those two matches. Dusty's money was deposited in a New York bank; and after a week of ballyhoo, Cal Torrey covered it.

But warming up with Torrey now before a packed Garden, feeling the hard, sure fire of Torrey's strokes, Dusty Dean knew a desperate moment in which he wondered if Cal Torrey had really wanted to duck out of this match; if, on the contrary, Torrey didn't welcome it. The way Torrey was smiling now—

But then the umpire called, "Play!" and there wasn't any time for wondering, for almost fearing. There was only the glossed court surface then, the white

lines, the feel of his bat in his suddenly clammy hand, and that big guy—that mocking, smiling big guy across the net waiting for his service.

Dusty served then, and the ten-grand match was on.

They'll tell you, those thousands who were lucky enough to be in the Garden that night, that they never saw a set like that first one in that Dusty Dean-Torrey ten-thousand-dollar match. That they never saw a set like that first one, unless it was the fifth.

In that first set, Dusty Dean and Cal Torrey cut loose everything they had. All their dazzling strokes, all their speed and fire, all their hatred for each other. As if they sought, by the sheer unbridled fury of their attacks, each to blast the other clean off the court from the very first.

They shook out all their strokes. They rallied for twenty, for twenty-two blasts from their base lines, their drives criss-crossing the court like white-hot lightning. They came to the net at the same time, and smashed the ball at each other's heads.

They didn't change pace in that first set. They did very little lobbing. They smashed, and slugged, and smashed again. The steady roaring of the gallery was like a giant surf storming to the rocks.

And when that first set was over, when Cal Torrey got a lucky net-cord break, and a linesman hesitated on a crucial drive of Dean's, and then called it "out," a bomb would have been a whisper in that din.

THAT first set went to Torrey, 7-5, and all at once, in that second set, those two grim men down there—the big, leering champion, and the spare, bouncing guy in shorts—cloaked their fire and began dueling.

They picked the backhand, and drilled shot after shot, flat drive and undercut

slugs to the backhand. And when they found no weakness there, they concentrated on the forehand.

Feeling each other out in four games, with the score 2—all, they both knew it was futile. Both of their games were sound, off the ground or overhead. So they began to change pace, seeking to force the other out of position, then to bring over the kill shot.

They went to 4—4 that way; 5—5; 6—6.

It was then, for the first time in the match, and the last, that Dusty Dean lost his head. He saw Mike Martin wave at him from a box—and suddenly Dusty saw red. He started to smash again, with everything he had, and Cal Torrey, smiling triumphantly, fed that rage by keeping Dusty off pace with a soft chop.

Dusty drove three straight over the back line, and when he came to then, it was too late. Cal Torrey had that game, and he went on to hold his service and take the second set.

The umpire called into the sudden hush: "Mr. Torrey now leads, two sets to love."

Dusty Dean fumed at himself. He called himself every name he knew. A sap! A dope, blowing off his top at that moment. And then, as the third set began, Dusty Dean started to grin, and he checked himself. He had made his mistake. Maybe Cal Torrey was going to make *his* mistake now!

Because Cal Torrey had gone into a soft game. A chopping and a lobbing game. He drew Dusty to the net with nicely turned drop shots, drove him back for high lobs.

Dusty crowed inwardly: "So the guy wants to play it safe, eh? He wants to break me down again, poop me, then blow me down!"

So then Dusty came joyfully to the net for the soft chops, slid smoothly halfway back-court to take the following

lob on his overhead; to take it, and powder it, and bang it away.

Here was where those long mornings in the gyms across the country paid dividends. Those crashing overheads bounced high over Torrey's bat into the boxes.

Cal Torrey looked at first unbelieving, and then he looked sour. But he stuck stubbornly to those guns throughout that third set, until the umpire called: "Game and set, Mr. Dean."

MIKE MARTIN worked on Dusty's legs in the intermission. "You're one set down," he growled woodenly. "But if you—"

Dusty rubbed his knuckles in Mike's scalp. "There ain't no 'ifs' in the book tonight, fella," he said soberly.

And then they were out there for the fourth set, and Dusty Dean dragged a deep breath and went to work. He started to chop and slice and lob. He took Cal Torrey's own weapons, the weapons with which Torrey had cut Dusty apart in the nationals last fall, and he turned them on Torrey.

For a moment, Torrey looked incredulous; and then he smiled gloatingly and began wading into those soft ones. Only Dusty Dean's soft ones were wabbling with their freight of spin, and Dusty, who had studied Torrey's pace night after night on the tour, kept those soft ones a shaded pace in back of Torrey.

So that Torrey kept overrunning them, as the greatest player in the world will overrun the perfectly timed, loaded chop.

For two games, Torrey overran them, and banged them six inches behind the base line. And then Torrey was two games down.

Cal Torrey's forced smile was a snarl then, and he went back to his base line, turned out his own soft game for Dusty's consumption. And they went

like that, through long dull rally after long dull rally, until the thousands in the gallery would have yawned if they hadn't felt that grim reality down there.

There was a point in the sixth game in which they chopped and sliced and overheaded cautiously for thirty balls. A point in which the spectators' heads slued sidewise and sidewise like ten thousand chickens on a wire.

And when neither of them cracked, when that fourth set went to Dusty on the strength of Torrey's first service break in the second game, they were both of them reeling on their feet and pouring sweat to their hair.

IT was in the eighth game of that fifth and final set—the ten-thousand-dollar set—with the two of them still chopping and slicing, giving the last ounce they had in their relentless effort to break down the other, that Cal Torrey cracked.

Torrey cracked as he all at once began hitting out wildly. He drove four points in a row into the far backstop, and then he walked to the umpire's chair and broke his racket.

The crowd stormed out of their overlong tension then, and for a long moment it was bedlam there in the Garden.

And then Dusty grinned—a gray ghost of a grin out of a face which ached with the racking ache of his whole body. The ache which in the old days

had made him say "To hell with it," and cut his losses and call it a day.

Swaying there slightly, grinning, Dusty knew then what Nicholas Dean had meant when he said that nothing was any good, unless you were willing to shoot your wad for it.

Dusty thought: "Well, if I can manage to lam a few more over there while that guy is still walking on his heels—"

He found he could lam a few more over there, and keep them straight, and that he could kind of careen up to the net even to smack down on Torrey's dinky returns.

He found—and he had a crazy, weak desire to laugh out loud then—that he could even get up there high enough to blow a couple of service aces down the slot to ice the cake—

And when it was over at last, and Dusty came out of his shower feeling like a million—

"Hey!" Dusty hollered, grabbing a wide-grinning Mike Martin. "I just remembered. I had my one and only ten grand on the line for this match, and now I've got twenty. How's about us buying that indoor courts and school layout and goin' to town?"

"How's about you havin' some fun on that twenty grand?" Mike Martin countered gruffly.

Dusty winked. "Uh-uh," he denied. "The way I'm all wore down now, I gotta figure for my old age."

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SIX GIRLS AND A BASKET



BY HANDLEY CROSS

YOU HAVE TO SEE IT TO BELIEVE THE BRAND OF FAST, HIGHLY-SKILLED, HARD-FIGHTING BASKETBALL THAT IS BEING PLAYED BY THE UP-TO-DATE WOMEN'S TEAMS OF TODAY.

Six Girls and a Basket

MUNICIPAL FORUM, in Wichita, Kansas, on a March evening two years ago. A crowd of well over five thousand basketball fans watching the Wichita Thurstons battle the Little Rock Flyers in their semifinal-round game in the Amateur Athletic Union's national women's basketball championship tournament.

Three minutes of playing time left in the final quarter. The Thurstons have been out in front all the way. Now they are leading at 26—19.

But the Flyers are as full of the old fight as any Stanford or Temple or Notre Dame team that ever ran out on a basketball court. With tall, slim Leota Barham and dark-haired Hazel Walker leading the attack, they shatter the Thurstons' close-guarding defense, and score four field goals and a free throw to lead at 28—26, with less than twenty seconds left to play.

There's a jump ball. The Thurstons get it. The seconds tick swiftly away as the Wichita girls pass and break desperately as they work to get a clear shot at the basket.

The timer, his eyes on the flying second hand of his watch, raises his pistol.

A pass goes to Lois Poole Ogden, a Thurstons forward. She's far out on the floor, but for a split second she is free. She shoots. As the ball drops through the cords, the bark of the timer's gun signals the end of the game.

Wichita Thurstons 28, Little Rock Flyers 28

There's a two-minute rest period. Now the teams line up for a three-minute overtime session. The whistle shrills as the referee tosses up the ball between the centers. The crowd roars as each one of the twelve girls down there on the floor puts everything she has into an effort to break the deadlock. But neither team is able to score.

Another two-minute rest period. Coaches and officials go into a huddle. Now it is announced that the first team that scores will win the game.

There they go! Hazel Walker out-jumps the Thurstons center and taps the ball to a Little Rock teammate. Three times the Flyers get shots, and three times the ball rolls around the rim of the basket and then drops outside.

Once more the Flyers attack swirls swiftly down the floor. But the blast of the referee's whistle stops it. Lucille Thurman, Flyers forward, has collided violently with an opposing guard. They have to call time out for her.

Play is resumed with a jump ball. Lucille, still dizzy, taps the ball, but there is no teammate in position to catch it, and it thuds down on the floor a few feet away from her. Quick as a flash, she leaps for it, picks it up, and shoots it backward over her head for the basket. While the shot still is in the air, she crumples up in a heap on the floor.

The crowd yells its acclaim as the ball zips through the cords for the goal that wins the game for the Little Rock Flyers!

The crowd still is yelling its delight—even if the home team lost—when, several minutes later, Bill Dunaway, the Little Rock coach, appears with the good news that Miss Thurman is quite all right.

"She fainted, mostly from excitement, I guess," he reports. "The first thing she said when she came to was, 'Who won?'"

THAT pulse-quickening battle between the Little Rock Flyers—who went on to win the 1937 championship—and the Wichita Thurstons still is remembered as the most sensational basketball game that ever has been played by girls' teams.

But it retains that distinction because the element of time played so dramatic a part in it, and because of its bearing

on the women's championship—not because the girls on the two teams played any better basketball than you can see any night of the national tournament, or in many a regular-season game between topflight girls' teams.

You have to see it to believe it—the brand of fast, highly skilled, hard-fighting basketball that is being played by the women's teams of today.

Of course, there is nothing new about women's basketball in itself. It is close to fifty years ago that Dr. James Naismith, the "father of basketball," organized and coached the first feminine teams—two of them. They played under men's rules, and they didn't play very well. After greatly modified rules for women had been devised, the game gained a good share of popularity at many girls' schools and women's colleges.

The girls' rules made the game easier for the girls, but they made it hard for the spectators. I don't think that any male who, twenty-five years or so ago, was lured to one of those pitty-pat contests between teams composed of young women weighed down by heavy flannel bloomers, middy blouses and thick stockings ever went back to see another. I know I didn't.

At some girls' schools and colleges, they still play that sort of basketball. The athletic authorities of those institutions of learning defend it on the ground that the game is for the girls, not for the spectators. The spectators agree with them heartily, and stay away from those games.

The girls' teams that play in the Amateur Athletic Union's annual national championship for women, and in various other big-time tournaments, aren't at all like that.

Bright-colored and much-abbreviated silk basketball suits have replaced the cumbersome bloomers and flapping middy blouses. A girl who wore stockings on the court would be suspected of

trying to attract attention, and the game itself has been pepped up and streamlined as much as have the playing costumes.

Well over half of the many thousand basketball fans who follow the fortunes of the high-ranking girls' teams are men. Maybe the fact that most of the players aren't at all hard to look at has something to do with that masculine interest. But the big reason is that the brand of basketball the girls play is well worth watching.

Six girls and a basket—or, rather, twelve girls and two baskets—provide a game that is chock-full of interest and thrills.

IN some parts of the country, most of the girls' teams play under boys' rules. We'll talk about that later. Just now, let's take a quick look at the women's rules which govern Amateur Athletic Union competition.

The size and marking of the court is the same in the women's game as it is in the men's. The ball is the same, and so are the baskets and backboards. The girls' game is shorter—four eight-minute quarters instead of two twenty-minute halves. Overtime periods also are shorter—three minutes instead of five. By mutual agreement, a girls' game may be won by the first team that scores two points in overtime play.

The most noticeable difference between men's and women's basketball, as played under the A. A. U. rules, is that the girls' teams are composed of six players instead of five. The additional player is a guard.

As soon as any one of the three guards obtains possession of the ball and passes it across the center line into the forward court, she may follow it across the line and play as a forward. But as soon as she enters the forward court, any forward of the opposing team may cross the center line and play as a guard.

However, there never may be more than four players of each team in either court. The way this rule works out, there usually are eight players in the offensive court, just about the same as in the men's game.

Under the men's rules, a team that has been scored against takes the ball out of bounds, and at once may start working it down toward the basket.

In the girls' game, a team which has been scored against gets the ball from the referee at the opposing team's foul line. The handling of the ball by the referee gives the girls a few seconds of rest after each score.

In the men's game, a player is disqualified for committing four personal fouls, but there is no limit on the number of technical fouls which he may commit and remain in the game.

In the women's game, a player is disqualified for four personal fouls, or five technical fouls, or a total of five personal and technical fouls.

The rule concerning the center jump is practically the same. In the girls' game, dribbling is limited to one bounce.

The presence of the sixth player on girls' teams, and the shorter playing periods, makes feminine basketball somewhat less exhausting than the men's game. To the spectators, it looks every bit as fast. But Bill Dunaway, the Little Rock Flyers' coach, says that it isn't as fast.

"The greatest girls' team that ever played," he contends, with more frankness than gallantry, "couldn't beat a fair-to-middlin' boys' team. Girls just aren't up to men's par in athletics, no matter how classy they may look while they are playing among themselves."

THAT'S one expert's expert opinion. But Dr. Phog Allen, the gifted University of Kansas coach who sometimes is called "basketball's miracle man," doesn't altogether agree with Mr. Dunaway.

After officiating in a couple of games in which Canada's remarkable Edmonton Grads played, he said of them: "I have seen college teams composed of men who would have to hustle to take their measure. The Grads are the greatest team, male or female, that it ever has been my pleasure to see in action."

Coming from a man who has watched as much high-class basketball as has Phog Allen, that was a really grand compliment for the Edmonton young ladies. But it doesn't settle the question of the relative strength of men's and women's basketball teams.

The Grads themselves have done their best to settle that question. They have played eight exhibition games against men's teams. They won seven of them, and lost the other one by a single point. But the masculine teams they have played have not been topflight outfits.

What would happen to the Grads, or any other girls' team, in the unlikely event of their being stacked up against a really first-class men's team—last year's Temple Owls, for example—is something that I'll have to leave to your imagination.

But what the Grads have done against girls' teams is a matter of record. And that record, stretching back through twenty-three years of play, seems to me to prove that they are the greatest team that ever has played women's basketball.

Up to the end of the season of 1937-38, they had played 484 games—and had won 467 of them

Twenty-six years ago, a young school-teacher named J. Percy Page, who had played basketball in Hamilton, Ontario, and later at Queen's University, was teaching boys' and girls' commercial classes at the then-new McDougall Commercial High School, in Edmonton, Alberta.

Physical drill was part of the school work. Mr. Page gave his assistant the choice of supervising the physical work

of either class; the assistant chose the boys, so Mr. Page took the girls' class.

Being a basketball enthusiast, he left the dumbbells and Indian clubs to gather dust in their racks, and started to teach the girls how to play his favorite game.

Basketball was a brand-new sport in the prairie province, and there was only an improvised outdoor court available at first. But the girls learned quickly, and so well that when, in 1914, a high-school league was organized, they won its championship.

Most of the girls who played on the 1914 team were graduated the following spring. Liking basketball too much to be willing to give it up, they organized the Commercial Graduates' Club, and asked Mr. Page to continue to coach their team. He consented—and he still is coaching it.

IT would require much more space than is available to review the Grads' marvelous record in detail. But here are some of its high spots:

They have won the Alberta championship every year but two since they have been playing.

And in one of those two years, they were unable to compete because of a European trip. They have played for the Canadian championship fifteen times, and never have lost a series.

They won the Underwood Trophy, for challenge play between American and Canadian teams, when it was offered in 1923, and they still hold it. They have played for the official North American championship—open only to national-champion teams—four times, and have won it three times.

On their three transatlantic trips, they have met and defeated the best European girls' teams, and they are recognized as world champions by the Federation Sportive Feminine Internationale. Chaperoned by Mrs. Page, they have traveled over a hundred thousand miles on competitive trips.

The Grads first attracted the attention of basketball fans south of the international line in 1923, when they played the Cleveland Favorite-Knits for the Underwood Trophy, and defeated them in two straight games.

Since then, they have won from many top-ranking American teams, among them the Chicago Lakeviews and Taylor-Trunks, the Cleveland Fisher Foods, the Tulsa Stenographers, and the Wichita Thurstons.

Unfortunately for women's international basketball competition, girls' teams in Canada do not play under the same rules as do the leading girls' teams in the United States. All Canadian women's basketball games are played under boys' rules; in the United States nearly all important women's competition is under women's rules.

Most of the international games which the Grads have played have been under boys' rules, a circumstance which, of course, handicaps their American opponents and which, some basketball followers say, makes the Grads look even better than they really are.

The worst defeat that the Grads ever suffered was at the hands of the Durant Cardinals in 1933, in a game played under women's rules. In justice to the Cardinals it must be added that they won both of the other games of the three-game series, playing under boys' rules.

The Grads evened that score three years later when they beat the Cardinals three games out of five. But by that time, the Cardinals had switched their allegiance to an oil company, and had become the El Dorado Lion Oilers.

I ASKED Mr. Page to tell me why his Grads win so consistently. "There are two chief reasons," he replied. "The first is that my girls all have grown up in a school where tradition reigns supreme. 'The team is the thing' is their motto. They forget their

desire for individual fame in their keener desire to play and to win as a unit.

"The second reason for our success, I think, is that I concentrate on a few simple plays, and have the girls practice them until they can execute them better than can any team we ever have played. I insist upon accurate shooting.

"Last season we attempted 991 field baskets, and scored 374 of them. That gave us a sharpshooting percentage of 37.7.

"Have you ever heard of a men's team that scored nearly 40 percent of its field goals *over an entire season*? I haven't. Our opponents—really good teams, too—attempted almost as many field goals as we did, but scored only 20.6 percent of them.

"Speaking of individual brilliance—which is something that I don't do very often—Etta Dann made good on 46.1 percent of her shots, and Noel MacDonald, our captain, was the team's high scorer with 100 field goals made on 230 attempts, a percentage of 43.5.

"Miss MacDonald, by the way, recently was awarded the Women's Amateur Athletic Federation of Canada Rose Bowl as Canada's outstanding woman athlete for 1938.

"Of course, the girls I am coaching this winter aren't the same girls I coached when the Grads started their career back in 1915. But the turnover in players hasn't been as great as one might expect; the girls like basketball so much that they continue to play as long as they can.

"During the past sixteen years, only thirty-six girls have worn the Grads uniform. All but two of them have been graduates of Commercial High School; the two exceptions were graduates of other Edmonton schools.

"The Grads always have been, are, and I hope always will be a real amateur team. Every girl has played basketball purely as a diversion, and not one of them ever has received so much

as a nickel, or any other consideration, because of her ability to play basketball."

There isn't a girls' basketball team in the United States which has anything like as much tradition back of it as there is back of the Edmonton Grads. As a usual thing, our better girl players don't stick to a team for more than a few seasons. They are likely to wear one uniform one year, and a different one the next year.

Naturally, this habit of shifting about gives rise to doubts about the purity of certain players' amateurism; but it doesn't keep the girls from playing brilliant and spirited basketball.

The standout teams are teams of individual stars—teams built up of girls who have earned basketball reputations. The Galveston Anicos, winners of last year's championship, are typical of these ready-made teams.

FOR several years, the Moody business interests in Galveston sponsored a girls' basketball team as a part of its extensive program of employees' athletic and social recreation. W. L. Moody, 3rd, became interested in this team, then became ambitious to develop a team good enough to win the national title.

In the summer of 1936, Mr. Moody engaged Sam Babb, who had been very successful with the Oklahoma City Cardinals, to coach a team to represent the American National Insurance Co., which is one of the Moody interests.

When Babb reported on his new job, he brought several of his Cardinals players with him. They made the Anicos strong enough to win runner-up honors in the 1937 national tournament.

Then Mr. Babb died, and Max Brand was appointed coach. He strengthened the team with a few able recruits, and won the title in 1938.

There wasn't a Galveston girl in the Anicos' line-up. Frances Williams, the

team's brightest star, is considered the greatest of girl basketball players.

Twenty-four years old, five feet eleven inches tall, and weighing a hundred and sixty pounds, she has been an All-American guard for the past six years—with the Fort Worth Undertakers in 1933, with the Oklahoma City Cardinals in 1934, with the Holdenville Flyers in 1935, with the El Dorado Lions in 1936, and with the Anicos in 1937 and last year.

Glennis Birket, an All-American forward for three years, played with the Wichita Thurstons in 1934 and with a Des Moines team in 1935 and 1936.

Helen Cathcart played with the Little Rock Flyers before she put on her Anicos uniform. All the other girls are experienced players who have been with several teams.

The Anicos have lost some of last year's stars, but have replaced them with other players of established reputation. Payton Shelton, their new coach, is optimistic about retaining the championship.

THE Little Rock Flyers, 1937 champions, also are a team of stars. "When I took charge," Coach Bill Dunaway told me, "the combined careers of the girl players boasted campaigns with the Tulsa Stenos, the Durant Cardinals, the Oklahoma City Cardinals, and the El Dorado Lions.

"Every girl on the team had had experience in national tournament play, and most of them had big reputations. But nearly all of them had come from little towns in Oklahoma and Arkansas, and their big reputations didn't interfere with their home-bred willingness to work for a living.

"The fact that the Lewis & Norwood Insurance Agency, the team's sponsor, had got together a group of star girl basketball players didn't mean that they were paying those girls to play basketball. They weren't, and they aren't.

SPO—4A

Only two of the girls work for the firm which sponsors the team. Any girl on the squad could quit basketball tomorrow, and still hold down her business job.

"A couple of the girls are married and keep house. Mrs. Hazel Walker Crutcher, who last year won the free-throw championship with forty-nine out of fifty—they call her the Chuck Hyatt of women's basketball—works in a bank. The other girls are stenographers or bookkeepers or clerks in business houses. They take their summer vacations in winter so that they can play in the national tournament.

"It can't be denied that good girl basketball players do a lot of shifting around. Tournament time in Wichita is like an old-home week, all reunions and excitement. Personally, I think that freedom from too-strict transfer rules has contributed a lot to the growth of women's basketball."

That's Mr. Dunaway's feeling about the transfer situation. It is the viewpoint of a man who knows the inside workings of the present system.

Some others who are interested think quite differently. While admitting that most of the girls' teams which represent business houses are normal outgrowths of the keen and increasing interest that employers are taking in industrial athletics, they say that some other teams quite obviously are being used for advertising certain business enterprises, a condition that is pretty certain to result in undercover professionalism.

They tell you that one of the most famous of girls' basketball teams was sponsored by the owner of a business college who went out and got the players he wanted. There wasn't a local girl among them.

His team was so good that it won several championships. And then he had to disband it because it was too costly a form of advertising.

WOMEN'S basketball is played pretty well all over the country, but it is in the Southwest—where all play is under women's rules—that it has reached its highest development.

All of the champion teams of recent years have come from that section—Babe Didrikson's Dallas Golden Cyclones, the Durant Cardinals, the Tulsa Stenos, the Little Rock Flyers, and the Galveston Anicos.

In the last few national tournaments high-school teams from Texas, Kansas and Oklahoma have showed that they can play most of the best girls' teams from other sections on even terms.

It is noticeable that the women's teams that win the big titles are coached by men, and that they are well coached. I have mentioned several of the top-line coaches. Ranking with them are Steve Beck, of the Tulsa Stenos, and Buddy Reynolds, of the Wichita Thurstons.

These coaches all teach the same brand of basketball—fundamentally the same fast and skilled basketball that is played by good men's teams, with minor tactical changes made necessary by the presence of the extra girl player.

Perhaps the most noticeable difference between the women's and men's games is that the girls do less scoring. That isn't because they are less aggressive players or less accurate shots, but

because their extra player makes their guarding tighter. In the final game of last year's championship tournament, the Anicos didn't allow the Wichita Thurstons to score a single field goal in the first half.

In the 1937 tournament, Lambuth College and the Kansas City Cardinals waged so tight a defensive battle that neither team was able to score a field goal in the first thirteen minutes of play.

What sort of a job is it, coaching a girls' basketball team? Let Bill Duna-way answer that question.

"When I was offered the job of coaching the Flyers," he says, "I didn't want it. I had played fourteen seasons of basketball, and had done some coaching, but I was only twenty-seven, and I'd never had anything to do with girls' teams; in fact, I'd seen few girls' games.

"I'd heard a lot of talk about feminine temperament and hair pulling in the dressing room. When I finally accepted the offer I felt sure that I was dribbling into certain trouble. But the girls fooled me. They weren't any different to coach than any other basketball players.

"Of course, I have to take a lot of ribbing from my friends because I'm 'involved' with a lot of good-looking girls whose average age is twenty-two. But, so far as I'm concerned, they're just a bunch of basketball players—and darned good ones!"

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LEONARD LUPTON

AUTHOR OF
"THE CANDY KID," ETC.

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HALFWAY up the side of the mountain, Lars Nelson braced himself on his skis and looked down into the moonlit valley below. The long runway of the ski jump, perched high on its wooden skeleton, fell away beneath him like a short cut to doom.

The moonlight was mellow on the snow; there was a peacefulness to the scene that was strangely at odds with the conflict that had taken place—even now taking place—on the mountainside this night.

He stared down into the valley waiting to see something move against that pallid background, and fear and hope commingled in his mind.

Hugo Waley had gone down that jump a few seconds past. He had gone, raging angry, throwing his weight and his skill into a mad and desperate effort to make the greatest jump ever recorded on Frog Mountain.

He had rocketed out into air, at the end of the jump and dropped away from sight. For a matter of seconds, Lars had waited now, to see his tiny, dark figure move against the dead-white background below.

Suddenly, Lars saw Hugo, his rival. Lars knew that Hugo had landed in the *telemark* lunge for the run-out. From where Lars stood, it looked as if Hugo Waley was making a perfect run-out at the end of his jump, and Lars' eyes narrowed. He could picture the triumph of Hugo's round, full face. He could guess at the mocking laughter in Hugo's black, snapping eyes.

Lars, with all the restraint and calm of his blue-eyed, blond-haired race, hated the flashy excitability of Hugo Waley. Lars suspected that Hugo couldn't be calm and a gentleman, in victory.

Now, Lars would have to beat Hugo's jump; he would have to accomplish, un-

der difficult circumstances, what seemed to be an impossible feat. For one brief instant, Lars knew regret that he had ever permitted himself to be trapped into such a situation. But it was not part of his philosophy to waste time with regrets. He drew a deep breath, settled himself, knees springy, and started down the snow-covered platform toward the take-off.

The wind started its weird song. It whistled past his face, sharp with frosty pain, and Lars crouched lower. His heart was beginning to hammer with excitement now. This was one of the top thrill-seconds of sport—this instant before wingless man soared out and upward into empty air.

Lars reached the rise in the slide at the end of the snow-covered runway. He soared. As contact with earth was cut off abruptly, Lars felt his spirits lighten. Even the added risk of this moonlight jump did not weigh him down with fear, now.

He settled earthward, swiftly. His body—lengthened at the point of take-off with arms upraised—now seemed to settle. He remembered not to strike snow-covered earth with every muscle taut. In case he fell, the injury would not be as great, if he was supple and relaxed.

HE landed then, in the *telemark* lunge—one ski thrust out in advance of the other, and knees flexed to take up the shock of landing. Tension grew as he wobbled for just an instant, starting the run-out. He was traveling fast, down the steep-pitched hill, toward the valley beyond.

Suddenly, there was a startling sound, and Lars went over sideways and fell in a flurry and smother of flying frost crystals. His jump was ruined, but he seemed to be uninjured in any way, which was more important now, by far.

He had hardly raised his face out of the snow into good, cold air, when

he heard again that startling sound—a rifle crack from the side of the hill, somewhere; and he did not imagine, this time, that he heard the whistling drone of the bullet. It was close.

Lars waited, tense, not knowing what to do. He was a perfect target against that white snow, as long as he remained motionless. He decided to move, and swiftly. He swung his legs around, got his skis straightened below him, on the side of the hill, and then he thrust upward with his arms and started to move at an angle across the hillside.

He gained speed, made a stem turn, angled downward again, and cut out toward the valley, and the protection of the evergreens below. He could see Hugo Waley waiting for him there, and he had time to wonder why Hugo did not take to shelter. Hugo must have heard the twin shots.

Lars wondered if Hugo knew that he himself would not serve as living target for that unseen marksman in the hills.

The thought rattled Lars a little. He had been aware, always, of the rivalry between himself and Hugo when it came to matching skill on the long sticks; but he didn't believe that that rivalry could reach the point, on Hugo's part, where he would master-mind such a situation.

As he came to stop beside Hugo, Lars saw that Hugo was grinning delightedly.

"Well, Scandinavian, I guess I took you that time!"

Lars knew that Hugo was razzing him, with the use of the word "Scandinavian," and he didn't like it. Lars was slow to anger, but he was capable of a terrible wrath, once he was fully aroused. He waited now, though, to see what Hugo would say about the two rifle shots.

"You beat me on form, all right," Lars conceded. "I was too upset over the rifle shots, to check where you landed. This is a fresh snowfall, and the mark must be there. But since I

lost on form, anyway, I am not going to risk going up the mountainside again to check on where I landed."

"Rifle shots?" asked Hugo. "What rifle shots?"

"You didn't hear them?" Lars inquired coldly.

"Of course, not—and you didn't either. You couldn't have. I was here all the while, watching you. I'd have heard any shots, if there were any."

Lars said: "You wouldn't call me a liar, would you?"

"Oh, no, no!" replied Hugo. "The only thing is—" He let the matter drop. He said to Lars instead: "You grant that I beat you on the agreed one jump tonight?"

"I grant that," agreed Lars.

"That's all. You owe me a new pair of ski poles, then. I am going out tomorrow to practice the *gelandesprung*. You'd better start practicing that *telemark lunge*, or you won't do much in the meet a week from next Saturday."

Lars shrugged.

"I'll be in town, shopping tomorrow. I'll get the ski poles and pay my debt to you. Where will I see you?"

"I generally hang around Otto's General Store Saturday afternoons when I am not skiing," Hugo said. "If it is not clear, you will find me there; otherwise, on the hill here or on the jump. And you?"

"Regardless of weather, I will not be skiing tomorrow," Lars replied. "Not on the jump, anyway—" He turned and looked back up the mountainside, with an odd expression on his face.

IT snowed fiercely the next day; a raging, howling blizzard that frosted a man with clinging, powdered white stuff before he had gone a dozen steps from shelter. Despite the weather, Lars had left the sawmill where he worked, to go to town. As he entered a sports supply store he noticed that the clerk eyed him curiously.

"Hello, Nelson," the clerk said. "What's on your mind?"

The greeting was gruff-toned, and Lars sensed animosity. He had always found the clerk friendly enough before. The change puzzled him.

"Hello, Ed," he said, "I want a pair of ski poles."

"Ski poles?" the clerk said in a half-kidding voice. "You aren't giving it up, then?"

"Giving what up?"

"Skiing! But then, of course, you'll be using the poles for ski-running. I get it! Just giving up the jumps."

"I guess I don't know what you're talking about," Lars said slowly.

"No? Well, let's skip it. Here's a good pole, top grade rawhide thongs—"

"Wait a minute," Lars interrupted. "What was that crack about me giving up ski jumps?"

"You want it?" the clerk said. "You won't get sore?"

"I want it," Lars said, "and I won't get sore at you!"

"O. K. There's a story around town that Hugo Waley challenged you to a moonlight jump, last night and beat you."

"That's true," Lars admitted. "The ski poles pay the bet. What's wrong with that?"

"That isn't all the story. The whole town heard today that your nerve weakened and that you've got some phony alibi that someone shot at you. That sounded kind of funny to the folks, and the consensus of opinion seemed to be that what you heard cracking was your nerve, not a rifle."

Lars said: "Thanks. I'll take these poles. Who spread that story?"

The clerk made out the slip. He didn't look up from his writing. "I've heard it a half dozen times already. Hard to tell who started it rolling."

"Hard to tell, huh?" said Lars. He thought of Hugo Waley's excited tri-

umph the night before; his bald denial that there had been any rifle shots. "Well, maybe you're right."

The clerk looked after him, as he went out. The clerk said to himself: "He don't look like a guy whose nerve would crack." He added, as an afterthought: "If it was Waley who started that story, and it must have been, I guess I wouldn't want to be Waley for the next few minutes!"

THERE was sound reasoning in the clerk's logic. Lars started at once toward Otto's General Store, where he knew that he could expect to find Waley. Along the way he passed two people he knew, and they nodded briefly and hurried on. The storm might have been the reason for their haste, but Lars read a deeper significance in their aloofness.

As Lars neared Otto's General Store, his heart started to pound. It was the same condition of suspense that always gripped him as he dropped earthward from the ski jump and prepared to land for the run-out. He thought of it—because of the skiing maneuver involved—as *telemark* tension. To one unfamiliar with skiing, it would have appeared as a mild case of the jitters.

It was quite late in the afternoon, and the gloom of the storm shortened the day so that lights were burning in Otto's General Store when Lars tramped up on the porch and kicked the snow from his boots.

He opened the door and walked into the room, and stood a minute blinking at the lights. Wood smoke and burning tobacco fumes mingled with the smell of kerosene and dried fish, to give the place a distinctive, pioneerish odor all its own.

A dozen men looked up. Some stood at the counter; others thumbed cards at a table near the back door of the main room. Kerosene lamps, swinging from

the ceiling, threw yellow light in circles on the plank floor. The scene was peaceful; but there was tension behind the elaborate unconcern of all those present.

Standing near the stove, talking to a couple of old-timers, Hugo Waley turned as the door opened, and he grinned as he saw the ski poles in Lars Nelson's hands.

"Hi," he said, "a gentleman and scholar! He pays his debts."

Lars put the ski poles on the counter. He was conscious of the sudden hush in the room. These men grouped here had always accepted him as an equal; as one of their own. But he could read their faces now. He could see there some of the sarcastic amusement which had marked the clerk's face back at the sporting goods store.

Lars pulled off his woolen cap and threw it on the counter. He unbuttoned his Mackinaw jacket and tossed that on top of the cap. He took a deep breath and pulled his belt tight.

The grin faded from Hugo Waley's face as he watched. He knew what Lars' actions meant; he knew the code of the back country. Hugo's own cap came off. He dropped his Mackinaw on top of it. He tightened his own belt.

Men moved away from the stove. Men moved away from the card table. A circle of curious, keenly excited men formed about the two sawmill hands.

"I hope you know what you're doing, Swede!" Hugo Waley said. And then, without hesitation, he doubled his huge fists and started toward Lars.

They clashed. The thud of blows seemed to make the oil lamps sway. The tramp of booted feet on the wide planks thundered in the room. Sweat gleamed on them now, beading brow and face, and the ebb and flood of battle tide carried them surging up and down the room.

IT couldn't last long. The pace was too swift, the blows too straight and hard. Lars used his left, steadily, and then he saw his chance and crashed his right across, and Hugo Waley went down, kicking. He remained there, flat on his back, and it was apparent that he would not at once get up.

Lars stepped back. He looked around the circle. He turned to the counter and picked up his coat and cap. He left the ski poles where he had first placed them. He turned back to face the room.

"That story," he said, "that's going up and down the town—write it off as a lie. I didn't lose my nerve, last night. I was beaten, but I didn't quit cold and alibi about it, no matter what Hugo Waley said."

Hugo was on his feet again now. His eyes and face were marked. He crossed to Lars. He said: "I heard the story in town today. I didn't spread it around, if that's what we were fighting for."

Lars didn't answer at once. But his fingers, fumbling with the buttons of his Mackinaw, faltered at their task. When at last he spoke, his voice was odd, strangely tense.

"I guess you mean that," he said.

"I mean it," Hugo Waley answered.

Lars took a deep breath. He looked at Hugo. "Wherever I went in town today," he said, "I heard about it. I thought that it *had* to be you."

"I knew you'd think that," Hugo Waley said. "That was why I fought you without trying to explain. I would have whipped you, if I could. But I heard the story when I first came to town, and I kept my mouth shut. I didn't even answer questions about whether I'd beaten you on the ski jump or not."

Lars was pale now. He could recognize the truth, at last, when he heard it

this way from Hugo Waley's bruised lips.

"In that case," Lars said to Hugo, "I've made a first-class fool of myself. But, after all, someone spread that lie around."

Hugo shrugged. He reached for his cap and coat. He said in a lower voice: "Maybe we'd better go somewhere and talk about this; it concerns us both, and I'm beginning to see where it might have some bearing on the ski meet next Saturday."

They went out together, leaving behind them an amazed group of men and the ski poles which Lars had bought in payment of his wager!

THEY stepped out of the driving blizzard into a restaurant down the street and ordered up pie and coffee. As they sat at the counter talking in low tones, the proprietor came toward them, mopping the marble top of the counter as he came.

"Some scrap you fellows had," he said amiably, rubbing a damp cloth over the spotless surface of his counter. "Wished I'd seen it."

Lars and Hugo exchanged glances, then looked at the restaurant owner.

"How did you get the news so quick?" Lars asked.

"Oh, you know how things get around. A fellow came by Otto's while it was going on. Said he'd looked in and seen it. Said he guessed that Hugo Waley would be too stiff and sore to practice any ski jumping before the meet, even if he wasn't ashamed to show his beaten face. Said that kind of finished up the two best men in the village. One of 'em with his face broken, the other with his nerve broken."

Lars jabbed his fork at the crusty pie. "Guess you mean that all right, Joe," he said. "Who was the guy?"

"Stranger to me. Got a cup o' cawfee and scrambled right out. Had the damndest-looking hat on ever I see, though.

I'd a sworn it was a coonskin cap like lots of fellows wear up here, only it was as blond as a showgirl."

Lars had started to raise the coffee cup to his lips. He set it down. "A blond fur cap, huh?" he said, startled.

Hugo Waley snapped his fingers. "Sam Slocum!" he exclaimed, "from up to Bridgetown. Their champ ski jumper. He's got himself a cap like that, and they say he bleached it to make himself stand out from the crowd. Kind of thinks he's hot stuff."

Lars said: "Hugo, it ticks like a clock, now. It was Sam Slocum who spread that story around today. He fixed it for me to make a fool of myself, and for you to maybe get hurt some, in the fight that he knew would come out of such talk."

"How did he know anything about it?" Hugo said.

Lars' face was somber now. "You really didn't hear any rifle shots?" he asked.

"I didn't," Hugo declared. "But the wind was against me when I jumped. That meant it was away from me. when the shots were fired. The way the wind howls through the spruce up there, it would have drowned out the shots. I never thought of that."

"I didn't either," said Lars. "But if we're guessing right, why does Sam Slocum come down here from Bridgetown and pull a couple of raw stunts like that?"

"He had it figured you'd blame me for everything," Hugo said. "He didn't guess we'd settle our differences and come in here for coffee and pie and run across the one clue that could tip us off."

Lars nodded. "That's it, all right. But what I don't understand is why should Sam Slocum go to all this trouble? Sam was last year's champ it is true. But—"

Lars finished his coffee. "I expect there's more to this whole thing than

we see on the surface," he said. "A lot more. But right now, I'm going to hunt up Mr. Sam Slocum and slap him down."

"Wait a minute!" Hugo put a detaining hand on Lars' arm. "What would that get you? It would only tip him off. For some reason, he's flattering us by trying to keep us out of the contest. Let him keep on trying and maybe he'll spill the reason just why it's so important that we don't compete."

Lars looked at Hugo and grinned. He said: "Maybe we made a mistake in not teaming up before. With your brains and my muscles we might get somewhere now."

A BIG crowd turned out for the ski meet the following Saturday and the day was perfect. But to Lars Nelson, there was nothing at all pleasant about the day.

He had looked upon it as his day of triumph. He had tried, twice before, to annex the championship and twice before Sam Slocum had come down from Bridgetown and beaten the field. Lars had felt that it was in the cards for him to come through this year; but the events of the past week had upset him considerably.

Despite the brain and muscle combination to which he had earlier referred, Lars realized that he and Hugo Waley hadn't solved the puzzle. Neither one of them had been able to prove the identity of the man who had talked with the restaurant owner. A couple of times Lars had wavered in the belief that it *had* been Sam Slocum. It was his final guess now, though, that Slocum himself had been in town on business and taken advantage of the situation.

The only flaw in this deduction was the fact that Sam Slocum had always seemed a real sportsman. In this town, from which he had twice taken home the championship, he was still popular,

a friendly rival. And Lars couldn't picture a man like that going around taking pot shots with a rifle at someone who was going to compete against him.

But there was no question that someone had been on the mountainside that night. The evidence of two empty cartridge shells, each of .32 caliber, was sufficient proof of that. Lars hadn't found the empty shells, himself, although he and Hugo had searched for them. Another man from the mill, Joe Potter, had made the discovery.

"That's the trouble with you, Lars," he had said, "you only look on the surface of things; you want to learn to look deeper."

Lars sensed some double meaning there. For a time he was suspicious of Joe Potter. Joe might have been the man who had masqueraded as Sam Slocum; the man who had crouched on the mountainside and fired those shots! But after calmer deliberation, Lars realized that Joe Potter would have had no object in doing so.

"Boy," Lars said to himself, "am I in a state of jitters! I'm even imagining that whoever went to all that trouble, will make another try to stop me, today. I've got to forget it."

He did try to forget it, for the meet was under way now, and the first man was going over the slip-off and down the snow-packed slide.

The first contestant's jump was fair; the form good, the distance one hundred and twenty feet. As the contestant started back up the hill for his second try, another man went down the slide and made his bid. Each man was to have three jumps; the best two of these three would count on form and distance.

Hugo Waley went next. He jumped in almost perfect form; his distance was one hundred and thirty-five feet. And then Sam Slocum went to meet that challenge. Sam did one-thirty-eight, and the roar of the crowd was a tribute to his nerve and skill.

LARS was next; as he started down the snow-packed slide, his heart was racing, and his throat was dry. Although it was broad daylight now, Lars wondered nervously if some unseen marksman was waiting on the hillside to spoil his landing.

The thought was still with him as he dropped to earth, and steadied down for the shock of landing. He had made a good jump, anyway; he was past the line where the jump counted. He landed in good style, set himself in the *telemark* lunge for the run-out.

The jump was measured and the distance announced.

"One hundred and thirty-five feet!"

Lars' pulse hopped. He hadn't done as well as Slocum, but he was tied with Hugo, and had two more chances. Also, and most important, there had been no rifle shot. The unseen marksman was not going to risk it today.

As Lars started back up the mountain for his second jump, he glanced over toward the side of the mountain where he had seen Joe Potter discover the ejected shells. He grinned a little at his own previous fright.

"Somebody was having some fun at my expense," he decided. "Nothing to it. I can devote all my thoughts to jumping now. If I can step the distance up for the next two jumps—"

He was at the top of the mountain now, and he stopped thinking, for the minute, about his unpleasant experience with the rifleman. Hugo Waley was readying for his second jump. Lars waited breathless.

"One hundred and thirty-six feet!" came the announcement.

Lars didn't worry. He felt that he might equal that. But Sam Slocum was the big problem. If Sam could reach his usual one-forty—

Sam Slocum went down the slide, and Lars watched him with deep interest. There was something about Sam today that made him look different.

Lars puzzled over it, as the Bridgetown jumper approached the up-curved take-off at the end of the run, and then Lars whistled in surprise.

Sam was wearing a woolen skating cap today. He had shed the blond fur hat which was almost his trademark! The fact might be wholly without meaning, and yet—

Lars approached the slip-off for his own jump. He looked down the snow-packed slide, and his gaze was narrowed. His problem had come back to torment him. Where was Sam Slocum's hat?

Slocum went up over the take-off. His body seemed to lengthen out. He dropped away, earthward, still seeming to gain speed. And when he landed on the run-out, it was not necessary for the officials to start out to measure. There was a gasp from the crowd, a roar that commingled horror with elation, and Sam Slocum was skidding down the hill, both feet in the air, and his jacket acting as a toboggan.

Slocum had overreached himself on that jump, and lost it on form. To some, who followed Slocum, this might have been a heartening sight. To Lars, it was tragedy. He regretted, like a good sportsman, that Slocum had had bad luck.

But there was a question in his mind again. How come that Slocum, whose form in a jump was usually the best of the field, had cracked up so badly? Had something happened? Had *he* heard the drone of a bullet in flight?

LARS was on his way down the slide before he realized that no one fired at Sam Slocum. His imagination had been working overtime. He had a state of jitters that was making him imagine things. There was no excitement below, now. The crowd was spread out waiting for his jump.

He came down, lunged into the *telemark*, shot down the run-out, and crashed!

For a minute, as he stretched there in the snow, Lars thought that he must have been unconscious, dreaming. For this time, in broad daylight, he had heard a shot again. He wouldn't swear that he had heard the whine of the bullet, as he had that night in the moonlight. But a rifle had cracked, and he had crashed.

As he looked around, got slowly erect, and steered out of the runway in a *stem* turn, Lars saw that a half dozen men were running through the snow toward the spot on the mountainside where Joe Potter had found the empty cartridge shells. As he watched, he saw a dark figure, plain against the snow, dodge from tree to tree on the mountainside, and start to work its way up the mountain.

Lars looked around. The crowd was watching, tense, alert. Sam Slocum, starting back up the hill, was watching, too. And Hugo Waley—where was he?

Lars knew that Waley should be on the top of the mountain, waiting for his third jump. But he wasn't sure that Waley would be there. He didn't know why, but there was something about that dodging figure that seemed familiar.

And then Lars saw that his thoughts were ridiculous. He was suspicious of everyone. What would Hugo have to gain by quitting the contest now and firing at the contestants from the side of the mountain?

Lars started back up the hill. As he hurried along in the wake of Sam Slocum, Lars was aware of a definite sense of relief. When he stopped to think about the matter, he still had a good chance.

Hugo Waley had jumped one hundred and thirty-five feet the first time, and one hundred thirty-six feet, the second time. He had one more chance, and probably couldn't top one thirty-six. As for Slocum—well, after that fall, Slocum might not do any better than

his original jump of one hundred and thirty-eight feet. In which case—"

Lars' spirits dropped. In which case, he would have to jump one hundred and forty-one feet to tie, granting that his form was as good as Sam Slocum's.

There was plenty of excitement at the top of the hill. No one seemed to know how the man with the rifle had made out in his flight toward freedom, since the woods hid the scene.

Lars wanted to talk to Hugo Waley about it, but Hugo was starting down the slide. He jumped well, in good form, but his distance was only one thirty-five.

SLOCUM went next. Curiously stout of features now, grim and relentless-looking, he shot down the slide in perfect form, went over the take-off at racing speed, and dropped away gracefully to the earth below.

Lars waited and his palms were sweaty. From his vantage point, he could see Slocum land and start the run-out. It was hard to gauge the distance of the jump, but the form seemed perfect. And then the distance was announced and relayed to them. Slocum had jumped only one thirty-six!

For a matter of seconds, Lars was elated; and then elation faded. He had never jumped one-forty. He would have to jump that to top Slocum, and in perfect form. He hesitated, undecided; but the memory of the past hazard decided him. The hazard was gone now; the unknown rifleman was being chased through the woods. And without the memory of a rifle shot to haunt him, could Lars do it?

Lars was going down the slide now. He crouched and the rush of wind past his face was like a hurricane blowing. He soared over the take-off. He went up and out and down, and his body seemed to be flung farther from the take-off than it had ever been flung before. His form was perfect. And then,

he was down and into the *telemark* lunge, and rushing up the hill, still balanced perfectly. As he came to a stop, Lars turned and he knew from the excitement of the men who were measuring his jump that something had happened. Lars couldn't decide if it was his jump that was causing the excitement, or the return of the men who had chased the rifleman over the hill. He learned it was both.

They were announcing the distance of Lars' jump first. Lars gasped himself.

"One hundred and forty-one feet!"

Lars knew that that was a record for the Frog Mountain jump. He knew, too, that he had beaten Sam Slocum. His pulse was pounding. It showed what a man could do when he could conquer fear, real or imagined, and concentrate on the job at hand.

But now, the men who had chased the rifleman, were returning. The crowd closed around them and Lars.

"Who was it?" Lars said.

"A fellow by name of Joe Potter!" one of the men said. "A new hand up at the sawmill, ain't he, Lars?"

Lars said: "That's right. No wonder he found the shells so easy. He knew where he'd dropped them the other night. But what I don't understand is why he did it."

ONE of the group said: "He knew he was recognized. He took a run-out on us, but before he ran, he said to ask Hugo Waley about the bet."

Waley started to run, but his skis tripped him. Lars pounced on him.

"What's this?" he said. "Were you bluffing me all the time, Hugo?"

"I don't know a thing about it!" Hugo swore.

One of the sawmill hands stepped up. "Maybe I know," he offered. "Hugo had a big bet with a couple of the mill hands. He bet on himself to beat you,

Lars, and he covered that bet by betting on Sam Slocum to win the championship, when he was up to Bridgetown to a dance, last week. We been comparing notes with some of the Bridgetown boys. It was at that dance that Slocum's blond hat was stolen. So you figure it out!"

"I can, now," Lars answered. "Hugo got Joe Potter to shoot at me and make me lose my bet in the moonlight jump. Then he bragged around town, and when I beat him up, he pretended to be my friend.

"Meanwhile, he got someone—Joe Potter, I suppose—to talk to the fellow in the restaurant about the fight. Which made it seem that Sam Slocum was back of it all, for Potter wore Slocum's famous hat that day. And then, to be on the safe side, he had Potter around to fire the rifle today and throw me off stride with a bad case of jitters. It was clever—if it had worked."

"What are you going to do about it? About Waley?" someone asked.

Lars was slow in answering. "Nothing," he said at last. "I licked him once. It wouldn't be any satisfaction now. And in a way, he helped me win the championship. If it hadn't been for the circumstances he planned, I'd never have got the shake-up that made me mad enough to win."

"O. K.," the man who had asked the question, spoke. "Let's help Hugo Waley out of town. We don't want him back."

Slocum crossed to Lars then, held out his hand. "Sorry for the part my hat played in this," he said.

Lars grinned. "We'll try to get it back for you, if we ever catch Potter."

"In case you catch him," Slocum chuckled, "you keep the hat. It belongs to you, by rights, now. You see, the hat goes with the championship."

And while the crowd cheered, the champ and the ex-champ grinned and shook hands.

IT MEANT THE END OF THE HOCKEY TRAIL FOR THE VETERAN SCOUT. BUT HE GOT OUT OF ANOTHER JAM WITH THE AID OF A

HOME-TOWN HERO



BY LESLIE MCFARLANE

AUTHOR OF: "TROUBLE ON SKATES," ETC.

Home-town Hero

EVERY time Skates Kelsey went broke, he made himself a solemn promise to reform. No more betting on the gee-gees. No more sitting up all night with the pretty pasteboards or the galloping dominoes. And no more liquor.

"Never again!" groaned Skates, as he sat dolefully on a sagging bed in a small-town hotel that winter evening.

This time, he meant it. He always did.

But always, whenever he got himself into one of these jams, there was a way out. He could always send a telegram to the business office of the Chiefs, big-league hockey team, and the long-suffering business manager would wire the erring scout an advance on salary.

But that way out was now closed. He had used it once too often.

Skates glumly surveyed the contents of his pockets, which he had emptied onto the dingy counterpane of the bed.

One empty match box, a bunch of keys, a corkscrew, a crumpled ace of clubs, a handkerchief that needed a bath, half a dozen old letters, two lead pencils and a couple of telegrams. No money—and no railway ticket.

That was bad—no railway ticket. One of the telegrams read:

WE HAVE COVERED YOUR BUM
CHECK AS REQUESTED BY YOUR
COLLECT WIRE OF TUESDAY
AND CREDITED SAME TO COVER
ONE MONTH'S SALARY IN LIEU
OF NOTICE STOP YOU ARE NOW
FIRED STOP

HARRON STOP PRESIDENT

To which Skates Kelsey had replied, collect:

YES STOP BUT HOW AM I TO
GET HOME STOP

Harron's answer was there on the bed:

YOUR TRANSPORTATION NO
LONGER PROBLEM OF THIS CLUB
PRAISE BE STOP TRY WALKING
YOU NO GOOD LOAFER STOP

ANY MORE COLLECT WIRES
WILL BOUNCE BACK FASTER
THAN ONE OF YOUR OWN
CHECKS STOP
HARRON

So that was that! Skates Kelsey shut his eyes and shuddered.

He got up and moved over toward the window. Snowflakes were falling gently and silently beyond the pane.

Mr. Kelsey, in dressing gown and pajamas, turned away from the window. The room was chilly and he was aware that he was hungry. He ran his fingers through his thinning sandy hair and pondered the problem of what to do when one is stranded without job or money in a one-horse lumber town.

He had arrived in Wheelsburg considerably the worse for wear, and on the principle that one may as well be hanged for a sheep as for a lamb, his first move had been to send his suit out to be cleaned and pressed. He had thrown in his hat, too, for repairs.

It occurred to him now that it might cause talk at the clerk's desk if he failed to tip the boy. So he took a pad of notepaper from his grip, sat down at the unsteady desk, uncapped his fountain pen and wrote the figure 4 at the top of the first blank page.

After a moment, he added: "All the boys on the team send their best wishes. Hope we see you again soon. Your old pal, Charlie Warner."

Mr. Kelsey blotted this carefully, tore out the page, folded it and thrust it into one of the letters on the bed. He was a short, paunchy man with a rubbery, good-humored face, traced with the purplish veins of high living and illuminated by a bulbous nose. Everyone said that Skates Kelsey was his own worst enemy.

HE was looking out the window again and vainly trying to think of someone to whom he could wire for funds when there was a knock at the door. The hotel's bellhop came in with his suit and hat.

"Here y'are, Mr. Kelsey."

"Thank you, son. Thank you," replied Skates Kelsey benevolently. "Put it on the bill." Then with a grand gesture: "Wait a minute! Wait a minute! A little tip for yourself."

He opened a bureau drawer, as if seeking silver, and then he turned. "Hockey fan?" he inquired, with a twinkle in his eye.

Mr. Kelsey had guessed right. He usually did. The bellhop, with big ears and buckteeth, confessed that hockey fans didn't come any hotter.

"You're the scout for the Chiefs, ain't you, Mr. Kelsey? Minute I saw your name on the register I said to Al—he's the clerk—I said: 'Why, that's Skates Kelsey, the old big-league defense.' I said to him: 'I betcha the Chiefs sent him to look at Tim Cardigan—'"

"You guessed right, my boy," interrupted Skates Kelsey. "And seeing you're a hockey fan, I'll ask you something. Which would you rather have, a small tip for delivering my suit, or an autograph of Charlie Warner?"

The lad's eyes bulged. "Charlie Warner! A real autograph, in his own writin'?"

"His own authentic signature," replied Mr. Kelsey. "I had a letter from good old Charlie just yesterday. Now, let me see—where did I put that letter? Ah, here it is!"

"Gosh!" exclaimed the boy reverently. "I'd give my shirt for Charlie Warner's autograph. Boy! Wait till I tell the fellows I've got that! Center for the Chiefs, Charlie Warner himself."

Mr. Kelsey handed the lad the page he had written a few minutes previously and the bellhop nearly expired with gratitude.

"You're goin' to the game tonight, ain'tcha, Mr. Kelsey?"

"Game?"

"Sure. Didn't you come up to look at Tim Cardigan?"

SKATES KELSEY smiled mysteriously. He had never heard of Tim Cardigan in his life; he didn't even know Wheelsburg had a hockey team. The only reason he was staying in Wheelsburg was because he hadn't been able to dig up the money to get him any farther.

"Seems to me I did hear something about a hockey game tonight," he said roguishly, and the boy grinned.

"You can't kid me, Mr. Kelsey. I guess we're gonna lose the best right-winger we've ever had in Wheelsburg after you get a peek at Tim."

The boy paused, then brightened up. "I dunno how we'll get along without him, but I was sayin' to Al, the clerk, just the other day: 'We'll never be able to keep a high-class player like Tim here,' I said. 'The big teams will have scouts lookin' him over and they'll sign him up quicker'n scat.' Yessir, that's just what I told him."

"He's pretty good, is he?" Mr. Kelsey was beginning to see possibilities in the situation.

"Good! Listen—"

The bellhop went into a rhapsody. To hear him tell it, Tim Cardigan was the greatest professional hockey prospect at large. He was smarter than a fox, faster than a rabbit, and had a shot that made goalies turn pale with terror.

When the boy finally departed, still chanting the praises of the phenomenal Cardigan, the erstwhile scout for the Chiefs got into his neatly creased pants, whistling.

The sun was shining again. Tim Cardigan was probably terrible. Most of these small-town marvels were.

"But just the same," muttered Skates Kelsey, taking his last clean shirt from his grip, "I'm sayin' right here and now that the kid belongs in the big time. He's a wow. And I've never even seen him yet."

Bland, portly and respectable once more in the freshly pressed suit, he pre-

pared to descend for dinner. No man without a nickel in his pocket could sign a dinner check with a grander flourish than Skates Kelsey.

At the door, however, he paused. Then he went back to the desk and notepaper. The dining-room waitress, he was sure, would appreciate an autograph of Dave McKenna, the Chief goalie, instead of a mere cash tip.

CHAPTER II.

A JEWEL IN THE STICKS

IT was just a routine schedule game between Wheelsburg and Blueberry Bay, but Tim Cardigan's hands were trembling as he laced up his hockey boots in the tiny dressing room that night.

He was a lanky youth, tough as whipcord, with ink-black hair and a good-natured mouth. Ordinarily, the preparations for a hockey contest found him relaxed, taking it easy; but tonight he was shaking. A pro scout would be in the rink, watching him!

That seemed hard to believe. A pro scout in Wheelsburg!

"It's your big chance, lad," said his father, Dennis Cardigan, sole proprietor of the Wheelsburg Garage. "You play the best you know how. They don't send scouts all the way up here for nothin'."

Dennis Cardigan straightened up on the bench beside his son and bestowed a wide grin on the boys in the dressing room.

"By gorry, he could do worse than sign up the lot of you."

Tim tightened up a lace. "Maybe it's just talk."

"No," declared his father. "I heard it with me own ears from Al, the clerk at the Central House. It's Skates Kelsey. And well I remember the name; one of the finest defense men in the country in his day. He gave young

Pete Barr an autograph of Charlie Warner."

"I saw it myself," piped up the goalie. "And Minnie, the dining-room girl. He gave her one of Dave McKenna, goalie for the Chiefs."

"And why shouldn't the Chiefs send a scout up to look at you?" demanded old Dennis. "Them big teams are lookin' for new blood all the time."

"How would he ever hear about me?"

"They'd hear about a good hockey player if he was playin' with a Eskimo team on an ice cake in Hudson Bay."

Tim stood up, straight and long-limbed. He reached for his stick and flexed it on the floor. He didn't seem excited, but he was. He tried to keep from thinking of what it would mean if a big-league scout actually saw him and liked him; if he actually landed a contract with a pro team.

Tim tried to put the dizzy prospect out of his head. It wouldn't do to count on it. Maybe the man wasn't a scout at all. And maybe he, Tim, wouldn't measure up to big-league standards, anyway.

"There's a big difference between the hockey we play here in Wheelsburg," he reminded the gang, "and the hockey they play in Madison Square Garden or the Forum."

"And where do you think they got the fellows who play in Madison Square Garden and the Forum?" demanded Dad Cardigan. "From small towns just like Wheelsburg. You just hop out there, me lad, and put Wheelsburg on the map!"

FOR twenty years, the Wheelsburg rink had looked as if it might collapse at any moment—and for twenty years it had continued to fool everyone.

The roof had been propped up with so many assorted beams, timbers and scantlings that visitors always said you could identify a Wheelsburg hockey fan

anywhere by his limber neck, developed by dodging his head around timbers while watching Wheelsburg hockey matches.

But Wheelsburg hockey fans didn't mind a touch of inconvenience or even danger with their sports fare. Every game found the ramshackle old rink crowded.

When the roof caved in—and Wheelsburg fans all agreed that only a miracle was holding it up—they gambled on the probability that the event would take place when there was no game in progress.

Tim batted the puck around in work-out with his teammates at one end of the ice, while the Blueberry Bay outfit got the kinks out of their systems in the opposite goal area. Tim's kid brother Mike, who subbed on defense, skated alongside.

"There he is—sittin' behind the rail just this side of the penalty box!" said Mike in a high state of excitement. "The red-faced guy in the derby."

The reference to the hue of Skates Kelsey's complexion was unnecessary. He was wearing the only derby there; the only derby in Wheelsburg, for that matter.

Tim cast a glance in the direction of the great Kelsey. So that stout little man over there had the power to lift a youngster out of the monotony and obscurity of a small town and thrust him into the glamour and fame of big-time hockey!

"Golly!" he said, and tried to keep calm. He didn't dare build up any hopes.

As Skates Kelsey watched the rangy Wheelsburg forward in work-out, his agile brain was busy. Mr. Kelsey's immediate problem was to pay his hotel bill and get transportation back to the city. As to how this was to be managed, short of risking jail, he had no particular scruples.

"I watch this kid do his stuff," com-

SPO—5A

muned Skates Kelsey with himself. "Then I phone Harron that I've discovered a natural and signed him for a try-out. Harron will be scared of missing something, and he'll send transportation for both of us."

He knew just what to expect of Tim Cardigan. A small-town hockey player who looked good against small-town competition. He had seen hundreds of them. Take them out of their own class and they become ordinary.

BUT the Wheelsburg team and the outfit from Blueberry Bay hadn't been playing for five minutes before Skates Kelsey was sitting up very straight and blinking.

Tim Cardigan could skate. Plenty of hockey players could skate—they all could, of course—but there is skating and *skating*. This was the real stuff, the real McCoy!

Kelsey saw that, the first time the lanky winger took the trip down the boards.

Cardigan had taken a pass at the blue line from one of his defense men. And then he broke. No wind-up. He simply broke from a standing start, and his journey down that right lane was a thing of beauty. The long legs ate up ice at every stride, and yet there seemed to be no extra effort. Tim Cardigan just loped down there like a greyhound, and when he crossed the blue line, his pass to center was just a flick of the wrists.

The Blueberry defense man got set with shoulders, knee and stick as Tim Cardigan skimmed straight toward him. He was ready.

Kelsey groaned.

"Why, that's no way to go in," gasped Skates Kelsey. And when the defense man cut loose with that body check, he looked to see Tim Cardigan knocked kicking.

But at the last split second, as the defense man lunged, lanky Cardigan just

wasn't there. He was around and in there like a gust of wind, with the defense man clattering to the ice. And he picked up the forward pass from his center, strolled in and poked the puck just inside the corner of the post as if there was no goalie doing a jumping-jack act inside the cage.

It all looked so simple and natural and easy that Kelsey was sure the Wheelsburg fans didn't appreciate it.

For all that, the Blueberry Bay players weren't topnotchers; they were strong and heavy, good checkers, and their goalie was no slouch. It takes art to beat any goalie single-handed, without lifting the puck off the ice, and make it look soft.

"So!" mused Skates Kelsey, with tingling spine. "Where has this kid been all my life?"

The Blueberry team, saddened by past experience, no doubt, had assigned a tough, red-headed husky to left wing, under obvious instructions to do no rushing whatever; to do nothing but hang on to Tim Cardigan.

It was fun to watch Cardigan handle this watchdog. How he faded away from butt ends and body checks, how his stick-handling tied the left-winger into knots. As a matter of fact, the whole Blueberry team paid special attention to the lanky lad in the way of roughing it up, loudly encouraged by a small delegation of supporters; but you can't smash a phantom with a cross check.

"Yes, sir," breathed Kelsey. "Regular ghost, that's what he is."

IT was Cardigan's footwork that did it, he decided finally. The boy might have been born with skates on. Kelsey had never seen anyone who could go faster on a straight rush, who could break quicker in any direction, who could feint and shift and side-step with such deceptive ease.

Cardigan never seemed to be trying

particularly hard. But when there was a pass to his wing, he was always there to take it.

When the Wheelsburg team were storming in around the Blueberry net, and Cardigan seemed to be loafing around outside the thick of the battle as an onlooker, there would be a swift, sudden swoop and he would be in there to collar a loose puck before anyone else had noticed the opening—and every time for a shot on goal.

Easy shots, they looked. He seldom tried a shot from farther than ten feet out. Always he worked in close. And then, that quick flip, as if it didn't matter.

But Skates Kelsey knew just how the goalie dreaded those tricky flips from close in—always headed toward an open corner! Much harder to block



Skates Kelsey was having a bad five minutes on the long-distance telephone.

than the fast, deliberate high shots from outside, although those were the drives that set the crowd cheering.

When Cardigan went to the bench, and a sub went to the wing in his stead, the Blueberry team managed to make some headway. The score was 4—1 against them, but they swamped the Wheelsburg crew with a series of wild-eyed rushes that netted them a couple of goals.

Then Cardigan came back. He was evidently an old and painful story to the Blueberry Bay team. They tried to rough him out of the picture.

Skates Kelsey learned then that Cardigan wasn't yellow. He could take it.

"Just a one-man circus!" beamed Skates Kelsey.

This, he told himself, was the greatest break of his life.

"When Harron gets a look at that prize package, I'll not only get my job back, but darned if I won't hit him for a raise. And get it."

CHAPTER III.

A LONG-DISTANCE CALL

FOR all his numerous faults, Skates Kelsey was a good scout. He knew hockey and he knew hockey players. During the rest of the game, he concentrated on Tim Cardigan, looked for every possible fault.

He saw many, but none that could not be corrected. Faults of inexperience. On the credit side of the ledger he satisfied himself that Tim Cardigan had speed to burn, that he made no waste motions, that he had the physique to stand up under heavy going.

Most important of all, Cardigan had the temperament of the good hockey player—and he had hockey brains.

"Give me hockey brains in a player," Kelsey always said, "and I don't care what else he's got. Even if he's one-legged, I'll take him ahead of the fancy stick handler or speed artist every time."

Along about the middle of the third period, with the Wheelsburg team leading by five goals, Skates Kelsey was satisfied. He had stumbled upon that rarest of gems—a hockey natural. From long habit, however, he maintained a poker face. Talk contract to some of these youngsters, and they got big ideas about money right away.

"What do you think of him, Mr. Kelsey?" asked the rink manager, squeezing in beside him.

"We-ell!" he replied. "It's hard to say. The boy is pretty green, of course. I've seen worse."

The rink manager was disappointed. He had expected that Kelsey would be singing hymns of praise.

"We think Tim is pretty good."

"He looks good in that company. He's got plenty to learn, though."

Skates Kelsey knew all about the rapidity of news circulation in a small community. It is more thorough than radio and just as fast. It was all over the rink inside five minutes that the scout for the Chiefs didn't think Tim Cardigan was so hot, after all.

Tim Cardigan, on the Wheelsburg bench, heard it and his heart tumbled clear down into his boots.

Dennis Cardigan growled: "What's the matter with the man? Is he blind? Doesn't he know a hockey player when he sees one?"

Tim burned up the ice in the final five minutes and the crowd applauded him loyally. He flipped in two goals, got an assist for another, looked like a million dollars on skates. When the game was over, he trudged to the dressing room trying to pretend to himself that he hadn't really expected to impress the scout.

SKATES KELSEY, escorted by the rink manager, paid the dressing room a visit after the game. Beaming jovially, Mr. Kelsey slapped backs, shook hands, complimented the

players on their victory, made himself on good terms with everyone.

Introduced to Tim he said: "You played a nice game out there tonight, kid."

Tim choked. "Thanks, Mr. Kelsey."

"How about trying out with the Chiefs?" asked Kelsey calmly.

The room swam in front of Tim's eyes. Resigned to failure, he couldn't believe his ears for a moment. Then he blurted:

"Why . . . why, you're not kidding, are you? Do you think I'm good enough?"

Kelsey shrugged. "That's up to the management. I send them a player and they give him a try-out." Then Skates Kelsey was fishing a folded sheet of paper from his pocket and handing it to Tim.

"This isn't a contract. But it gives me first call on your hockey services. Doesn't affect your amateur standing. Sign it, and I'll take you down for that try-out as soon as you can get ready."

The other players were squeaking with excitement. Dennis Cardigan reached over and took the paper from his son.

"I'll just read this over, me boy." He scanned the page carefully. "It doesn't say anything here about who pays Tim's fare to the city."

"Why, we do, naturally," Skates Kelsey assured him blithely. "All he has to do is sign that paper and we look after everything."

Dad Cardigan gave the paper back to Tim. "You can sign it, son."

Tim signed. The players cheered. It was all over Wheelsburg in ten minutes that Tim Cardigan had been snapped up by the big-league Chiefs at a fabulous salary and would be playing right wing for the team within a week. Wheelsburg was on the map.

But while Tim was walking home on air, dizzy with the prospect of fame and fortune ahead of him, with Dad Cardigan and young Mike strutting beside

him as proud as a pair of peacocks in his reflected glory, Skates Kelsey was having a bad five minutes on the long-distance telephone. At ninety cents a minute, charged against his hotel bill.

"But listen, Harron, I tell you this boy is a natural. He's got the makings of one of the best right-wingers in hockey, and you know how scarce they are. And I've got him for the Chiefs. All signed up."

"Boloney! You got my telegram, didn't you?"

"Yes, but—"

"Well, it still goes."

"Have a heart!" begged Skates, desperately. "I tell you this is serious. If you pass up this player—"

"Listen," said his boss, coldly. "You're in a jam up there, and I'm glad of it. Serves you right. You figure you can give me a song-and-dance about some punk and I'll send you the dough to bring him down here."

"You know I wouldn't try to play a trick like that on you."

"I know damned well that's just the trick you're trying to pull right now. I know just how your mind works. If this guy was any good, we'd have heard of him before now. Nix!"

Skates Kelsey was horrified. "You can't do this to me!" he bleated. "I've got the kid all signed up."

"Then unsign him," snapped Harron. "I don't want any part of him, or you either."

THE receiver clicked smartly in Skates Kelsey's ear. He was sweating as he stumbled out of the phone booth at the back of the hotel lobby.

He hadn't dared put the call through collect, for fear it would be refused, which would have made Al, the hotel clerk, highly suspicious. As it was, he hoped the girl on night duty at the local switchboard had resisted any temptation to listen in.

He flopped into a leather chair by the window and stared moodily out at the snow-covered road. He had started this as a gag, and now that it was on the level, he was hogtied. There he was, with a superdooper of a right-winger in his pocket, and he might as well be in Siam, for all the good it was going to do him.

Skates Kelsey had wriggled out of many a tight corner in his time, but for once it looked as if he was stymied. Was this what a man got for reforming? The minute he stepped on the straight and narrow path, Fate socked him with a sandbag.

His thoughts darted this way and that, like trapped mice. Once let the townspeople get wise to the true state of affairs and they would chase him clear to the next county.

"I've got to get that kid down to the city," mused Kelsey, in desperation. "One look at him, and Harron will take everything back."

But how to get out? A big-league scout couldn't ask a prospect to ride side-door Pullman, with a wrathful hotel manager shrieking vengeance for an unpaid hotel bill.

And so Skates Kelsey sat immersed in gloom.

While in the Cardigan kitchen, Dad Cardigan sucked at his pipe and gazed proudly at his eldest son. Ma Cardigan, brushing away an occasional tear, was going over Tim's socks and underwear.

"Did the man say what pay you'd be getting?" she asked.

Tim shook his head. "He didn't talk money. But if they sign me, I'll probably get about fifty a week to start."

"Holy oats!" breathed young Mike, in awe.

"You'll be drawin' down seven or eight thousand dollars a season before you're much older," predicted Dad Cardigan. "Smart men like Mr. Kelsey

don't waste their time on players that ain't worth it."

"This time tomorrow night," said Ma Cardigan, her voice proud and sad, "you'll probably be on your way to the city. In a Pullman car, maybe."

CHAPTER IV.

LICKED TO A FRAZZLE

BY morning, after a sleepless night, Skates Kelsey was still racking his brains for an idea. Most of the notions that had occurred to him revolved about rubber checks, and he knew the railway ticket office wouldn't take a check, anyway.

But at breakfast, where he presented his usual blandly confident front, an idea was given to him. By none other than Tim Cardigan himself, who peeped into the dining room and came humbly over to his table.

"Sit down, son! Sit down!" beamed Kelsey. "Had your breakfast? Well, have a cup of coffee, anyway. Minnie, a cup of coffee for Tim. What's on your mind, boy? All ready for the trip?"

Tim sat down. "Did you . . . did you want me to leave right away, Mr. Kelsey? Today?"

"Well, the sooner the better, of course," replied Kelsey, wondering what was in the wind and hoping Tim wouldn't want to leave for a week. "What's up?"

"It's this way. Mr. Parkes, the rink manager, got a telegram this morning from a barnstorming outfit that's been playing games in the West, and they'd like a game here tomorrow night."

"And you'd like to play?"

"Well, it isn't that so much as the fact that Mr. Parkes and some of the boys talked it over and they figured it would be a nice idea to make it a benefit game—for me, so I'd have a little spending money."

At the magic word "money," Skates

Kelsey sat up, eyes agleam. An answer to prayer! Why hadn't he thought of it himself?

"Why, naturally, my boy, you can't miss your own benefit game!" he boomed jovially. "I'll stay over myself. And you tell the boys I want to help. I'll face the puck. Why, I'll even sell tickets!"

"Would you? Gosh!" Tim was overwhelmed.

No doubt about it, this Skates Kelsey was a swell fellow. Imagine, a famous man like Kelsey actually offering to sell tickets for a hockey benefit. The fans would fight for the privilege of buying them.

"I'll be only too glad to help," promised Mr. Kelsey fervently.

There wasn't any dishonesty in Kelsey's make-up, to the extent that he wanted to lay hands on the benefit money for himself. All he wanted was ready cash, which would certainly be returned to Tim Cardigan just as soon as the Chiefs' manager saw him and realized that Kelsey had not been exaggerating his worth at all.

It was for Cardigan's own good, Kelsey told himself. To what better use could the benefit money be devoted than to guarantee Cardigan his try-out? Kelsey wasn't crooked. Just desperate.

All that afternoon, as soon as the tickets were ready at the Wheelsburg printing shop, Skates Kelsey worked for the cause. All he needed, he figured, was a miserable seventy-five dollars to cover transportation, berths, meals and hotel bill. But with tickets selling at thirty-five cents each and the barnstorming team—the Black Bombers by name—demanding a sixty-forty split of the gross, it would take some doing.

Feverishly, he plunged into the business of getting rid of tickets. "Gimme a couple of hundred—three hundred!" he told Tim.

"Good gosh, Mr. Kelsey, the fellows

figured that if you even sold forty or fifty—"

"Chicken feed. I'll show you how to sell tickets. Does this town send a player up to the big time every day?"

AS a ticket salesman, Kelsey was a howling success. Any customer who sought the honor of shaking the great Skates Kelsey's hand at the cost of buying one ticket had a rude jolt in store for him.

"One ticket!" Kelsey would exclaim with mock horror, taking the sting out of it with a hearty chuckle. "This is a benefit. You can use extra tickets. Give 'em away, keep 'em for souvenirs."

Anyone who tried to buy one or even two tickets and was foolish enough to produce a dollar bill in payment discovered that Mr. Kelsey never had any change, but he had lots more tickets.

"You've got the finest right-winger in hockey right here in Wheelsburg. He's gonna make your town famous. Don't you appreciate him? Well then, show him, by making this benefit a sell-out," he chanted.

Skates Kelsey bullied Wheelsburg into buying tickets until it hurt, and made them like it.

The money rolled in. By noon next day, Skates Kelsey's pockets sagged with the weight of one hundred and forty dollars in cash, with more to come at the box office. How was he going to hang onto seventy-five dollars of this without stirring up unworthy suspicions?

If Tim Cardigan balked at a confidential suggestion that Skates Kelsey should take charge of his affairs and look after his money for him, considering Mr. Kelsey's vast experience and in view of all he had done to put the benefit over with a bang, the youngster would be either a good deal shrewder or a lot more ungrateful than Kelsey expected.

"Yes, sir," mused Skates Kelsey, "a man with brains can always land on his feet somehow."

Everything was lovely.

And then the Black Bombers arrived on the afternoon train, along with a bundle of daily papers from the nearest city and a small, gloomy traveler for a wholesale meat firm.

The Bombers, the newspapers, and the traveler—who checked in at the Central House modestly as R. B. Jones—were destined to affect the fortunes of Skates Kelsey and Tim Cardigan.

Kelsey was in the hotel lobby when the Bombers arrived. They came trooping in, a dozen husky young fellows led by a swarthy six-footer named Dave Carter. And the moment Kelsey laid eyes on the Bomber chieftain, he sagged like a deflated tire and uttered a moan of pained astonishment.

As for Carter, when he recognized Skates Kelsey, his mouth opened in surprise. Then he bristled. They knew each other of old, and no love had ever been lost between them. Bitter enemies and deadly rivals they were, for Carter, too, had been a big leaguer in the days when Skates Kelsey was in his prime.

The feud between them had been historic from the day Kelsey dumped Dave Carter into the boards during the first game in which they ever tangled. The present crookedness of Carter's nose was a memento of that occasion.

CARTER recognized his old enemy. "Hello, Cheapskates," he grunted out of the side of his mouth, using the salutation that had started many an ice battle in the old days. "Didn't expect to find you here. This your home town?"

Kelsey shook his head. He was doing a lot of fast thinking. He had never cared for the sight of Dave Carter at any time; but just now, the arrival of his bitterest enemy promised to be disastrous. For Dave Carter was an unofficial scout for the Red Wings!

"I'm here on business," Kelsey said shortly.

"Had to go to work for a living?" inquired Carter. "Whatcha been doing since the Chiefs fired you?"

Skates Kelsey stiffened. Everyone in the lobby, including Al, the clerk, and half a dozen natives of Wheelsburg, had heard that crack. It created a sensation.

"You're nuts," he answered. "I'm still scouting for the Chiefs."

"Sez you!" snapped Carter. "It's in all the papers. I read it on the train this morning."

He whipped a newspaper out of his pocket, flipped it open to the sports section and thrust the page under Kelsey's nose.

"Who's lyin', Cheapskates?" he demanded. "Me, you or the newspaper?"

Dully, Skates Kelsey read the item under a city dateline:

CHIEFS DROP SCOUT

Rumored as a possibility in hockey circles for some time, the retirement of Skates Kelsey, former pro star, as scout for the Chiefs, was definitely announced by President Ben Harron of the Chiefs today. Foster Denning, publicity representative of the club, will finish out the season as scout and leaves tonight on a swing through the East to watch leading amateur teams in action.

Skates Kelsey flushed and swallowed hard. For once, his nerve was shattered.

"Who's lyin'?" repeated Carter.

"You are," said Kelsey, in a hoarse voice, and turned away. "I'm still scoutin' for the Chiefs. I don't care what the papers say."

Inside five minutes, every newspaper that arrived on the afternoon train had been snapped up. The news was all over town.

Dave Carter was explaining to Al, the hotel clerk, and a growing crowd of Wheelsburgians that Skates Kelsey was a booze artist, a gambler and a bum, particularly untrustworthy in money

matters, and that it was a wonder the Chiefs had ever put up with him at all.

Tim Cardigan was staggered when he heard the story. Did this mean that he wasn't going to get his try-out with the Chiefs after all?

WORRIED, he talked it over with his equally worried father in the garage office, and into the conference strode Parkes, the rink manager. Parkes was in a sweat.

"The fair thing to do is for us to go and ask Mr. Kelsey what's what, and hear what he has to say for himself," suggested Dennis Cardigan.

"I don't care what he has to say for himself," snapped Parkes. "He's got a lot of money belonging to us from those tickets he sold, and I'm taking no chances."

"Begorra!" said Dennis, turning pale. "If he's a crook, he may be plan-nin' on skipping out."

They lost no time in hustling over to the hotel. To their vast relief, they found that Skates Kelsey had not skipped out, but was in his room. And Mr. Kelsey, who had recovered some of his nerve, was ready for them.

"All nonsense!" he assured them smoothly. "Why, I was talking to Mr. Harron just last night on long distance. Told him I was bringing Tim down with me."

"But it said in the paper—" objected Dennis Cardigan.

"Must be some mistake," declared Skates Kelsey firmly. "In the first place, they couldn't dismiss me without notice. Doesn't a season's contract mean anything?"

They began to weaken. Skates Kelsey talked fast and with conviction. Inside five minutes, they were apologizing to him. Even if the Chiefs did want to fire him when he got back to the city, said Mr. Kelsey, it wouldn't stand in the way of Tim Cardigan's try-out.

But it was Parkes, the rink manager,

who had the last word. "I'm mighty glad we've got the truth about this, Mr. Kelsey," he said. "We were afraid, for a minute, that maybe Tim wouldn't get going south after all. By the way, could I have your returns for all them tickets you sold?"

Skates Kelsey winced. The blow had fallen. "Why, certainly. Certainly," he replied. "I'll drop in at the box office tonight and fix it up."

Mr. Parkes drew him over to the window. "I'd just as soon have the money now, if you don't mind, Mr. Kelsey. You see, instead of givin' Tim the cash," he whispered confidentially, "we made up our minds to buy him a watch and a club bag."

Skates Kelsey took it like a man. He coughed up. There was a slight discrepancy between the number of tickets he claimed to have sold and the number of tickets he said he had left, as against the number of tickets originally given him; but, at that, he didn't manage to hold out more than a dollar and a half.

When his visitors left, he slumped down on the bed. "Licked!" he groaned. "Licked to a frazzle! And when Dave Carter gets a look at this Cardigan boy in action tonight, it won't be the Chiefs who'll sign him. Carter will sign him for the Red Wings, sure as shootin'."

CHAPTER V.

ALL AT SEA

MR. R. B. JONES, the meat salesman, was a quiet, business-like little man with a tight mouth and a close-cropped mustache. He visited Wheelsburg's two butcher shops that afternoon, explained that he was substituting for the man who usually covered the territory, took a few orders and kept his ears open.

He heard a good deal of hockey talk, and apparently it interested him so much that he decided to stay over for

the game, although he could have gone out on the six-o'clock local.

When Tim Cardigan came down to the rink that night, he was all set to show his fans and friends in Wheelsburg that their confidence in him hadn't been misplaced. He was r'arin' to go, itching to play the sort of game that they would remember. This would be his night!

He was flabbergasted when Skates Kelsey, who came in looking as bland and jovial as ever, took him off into a corner of the dressing room and said:

"Tim, I'm going to ask you to do something for me. Maybe it won't be easy. Maybe you won't like it. But for the sake of your own future, I want you to do it."

Tim blinked. "Why, sure. What do you want me to do, Mr. Kelsey?"

"I want you to take it easy out there tonight, Tim."

"Take it easy? Why, gosh, this is my benefit, Mr. Kelsey. This is my send-off. They'll be expectin' me to cut loose with everything I've got."

"And that's just what you're not to do. This barnstorming team is a rough bunch, Tim. I don't want you to run any chances of being hurt."

"Shucks, they'll never touch me."

"Listen. Do you know that this fellow Carter, who manages the Bombers, is hooked up with the Red Wings? Well, he is. I've been hearing a few things," continued Kelsey mysteriously. "If you came out of this game with a Charley horse or a wrenched shoulder or a cracked rib—"

"They wouldn't deliberately try to get me."

"Well, if anything happened to you, I couldn't take you down for a try-out. And the Red Wings aren't anxious to see the Chiefs strengthened at right wing at this stage of the season, my boy. Think it over."

Tim thought it over. He nodded slowly.

"What's more," declared Kelsey impressively, "I don't want the other pro teams to know anything about how good you are until the time comes. If Carter can report to the Red Wings that I'm making a mistake in signing you up, so much the better."

Skates Kelsey made it sound very convincing. His real motive, of course, was to forestall the possibility that his old enemy, Carter, might steal this prize right-winger. Kelsey didn't care if Cardigan stayed in Wheelsburg the rest of his life.

"If I can't get him, I'll be darned if I'll let Carter have him," he told himself.

"I've never played a game in my life that I didn't do my best," said Tim Cardigan. "All my friends will be out there hollerin' for me. They won't know what to make of it. But if you think it's best, Mr. Kelsey—"

Skates Kelsey slapped him warmly on the shoulder. "I knew you'd be sensible about it, Tim. It's a hard thing to do, but pro hockey is tricky business. I'm giving you the soundest advice I know."

WHEN Tim Cardigan skated out for the game with the barnstorming Bombers that night, a thunderous roar went up from the fans who jammed every corner of the rink.

Every eye in the building was on him. It was his night. But three pairs of eyes were fixed on him with more than ordinary interest.

Dave Carter, manager of the Bombers and unofficial scout for the Red Wings, had heard all about Tim Cardigan that afternoon—all about how Cardigan was leaving for a try-out with the Chiefs. And Carter was saying:

"If the kid is any good, I'll push Kelsey out of the picture so fast it'll make his head swim."

Skates Kelsey, sitting in a rail seat morosely, with his hat brim down over

his eyes, was wondering how he was going to get out of town. Broke again, there wasn't a chance in the world that he could keep his promise to bring Cardigan south for a try-out.

"Anyhow, I've fixed it so Carter won't want to steal him. And maybe if I can get back home and talk to Harron, they'll send for the kid."

Mr. R. B. Jones, the meat salesman, sitting two rows behind Kelsey, watched Tim Cardigan skate over to position. And R. B. Jones said to himself:

"Kelsey, you're a cold-blooded crook. Kidding that boy into thinking he's going to be a big leaguer when you know he hasn't a chance. Making a fool of him right in his own home town."

Mr. Jones was sorry for Tim Cardigan.

Small boys along the rail near Tim Cardigan were yelling shrilly, "You show 'em, Tim!" as the referee faced off the puck. "Show these barnstormers some big-league hockey, Tim!"

Those eager shouts of encouragement didn't make Tim feel so good. He felt that he was double-crossing those youngsters. But Skates Kelsey was giving him his big chance; Skates Kelsey wouldn't have asked him to take it easy in this game without good reason.

The Bombers played in an Eastern league with little opposition and a short schedule, and their barnstorming trip had been arranged to give them extra games and a variety of opposition.

A good team of hockey tramps, they were tired from their journey and were taking this exhibition lightly—with the exception of Leask, their left-winger, who had been told by Dave Carter to go out there and extend Tim Cardigan to the limit.

On the very first play, when Leask took a pass from his center and broke down the boards, Tim took a hard smash into the fence when he tried to stop the fast-traveling Bomber wing. He scrambled up and went pelting after Leask,

stole the puck from him inside the blue line and whirled back. The crowd roared in expectation of a Wheelsburg attack.

But Tim remembered what Kelsey had told him. He put on the brakes at mid-ice and went in cautiously, passed to center. The Bomber center raced in fast to intercept the pass and wheeled away on the attack.

There were a few murmurs from the Wheelsburg fans. Their hero, Tim Cardigan, hadn't looked so good on that play.

But they comforted themselves with assurances that Tim would soon settle down to business, and then it would take the whole Bomber team to hold him.

FIVE minutes passed. Ten minutes. The Wheelsburg players kept feeding the puck to Tim, as they always did, depending on him to lead the rushes into enemy territory.

But the old speed, the old brilliance of stick-handling and footwork, the heady play-making—these were missing. He moved in fits and starts, his checking was cautious and clumsy, he didn't seem to be sure of himself.

The truth of the matter was that Tim Cardigan didn't know how to play anything but his usual game. Trying to hold himself in and to take it easy, he floundered.

Leask, his check, ran wild on the wing and tore through for a couple of goals before the period was half over.

Half a dozen times, Tim forgot himself and ripped into the game with some of his old fire; but just when the fans thought they were seeing the Tim Cardigan they knew, these flare-ups petered out and he settled down to that cagy, wooden style of play so foreign to him.

The rest of the Wheelsburg team didn't know what to make of it. They were so accustomed to Tim's leadership that now they were utterly at sea. Dennis Cardigan, manager of the team, was

so flustered that he kept sending out substitutes repeatedly, trying to get a combination that would click.

But nothing clicked, except the Bombers' attack.

The Bombers came down on swift, stabbing, two and three-man rushes that swept neatly over the blue line again and again. Two more goals were chalked up along with Leask's tallies, and they came so easily that the Bombers began laying back a little. After all, this was only an exhibition game, and it wouldn't be good policy to tramp all over the home team.

"That guy a hockey player!" exclaimed Dave Carter, when the period ended and he had seen all of Tim Cardigan that he considered necessary. "He's terrible. Cheapskate Kelsey was trying to pull a fast one, all right."

Behind him, he could hear the fans grumbling.

"What's the matter with Tim?"

"He's away off his game."

"Never saw him play worse."

But those remarks didn't impress Carter. He had heard that sort of talk before.

TIM didn't have much to say for himself in the dressing room between periods. He knew better than anyone else that he was giving a terrible exhibition, but he didn't know how to make it look any smoother without disobeying Skates Kelsey.

"You feelin' all right tonight, son?" ventured Dennis Cardigan.

"Sure, I'm all right."

"Don't seem to be playin' your usual game, kind of."

"I'm not taking any chances on getting hurt in an exhibition game, with a pro try-out waiting for me," flared Tim.

"Yeah, I know, but just the same—"

Dennis Cardigan didn't finish what he wanted to say. It wasn't like Tim to give hockey anything but his best, whether the going was rough or easy.

Tim put in a miserable twenty minutes in the second period. Leask, the Bomber winger, tried to stir him up, rammed him against the boards a couple of times, mixed it up with him in the corners, for Leask sensed something wrong, and he was wondering if this Wheelsburg forward had anything, after all. But Tim took his bumping meekly and began steering clear of Leask whenever he could.

It developed into a sloppy game. The Wheelsburg team couldn't do anything right, and the Bombers just coasted. The Wheelsburg fans gaped, astounded at the spectacle of Tim Cardigan, whom they had come to honor, backing away from body checks and generally turning in the most futile game they had ever seen him play.

The score at the end of the second period was 6—0 in favor of the Bombers. And when the mayor of Wheelsburg came out onto the ice in the rest period and called Tim out for the presentation, the applause wasn't as spirited as it might have been.

The mayor presented Tim with a gold watch and a fine new club bag, which Tim accepted with the air of one who didn't deserve anything of the sort.

And when the mayor spoke of Wheelsburg's high hopes for "this sterling young athlete who will soon make the name of Wheelsburg famous when he takes his place with the finest hockey players in the world," there did seem to be a doubtful note in the cheering that followed.

Dave Carter laughed out loud.

MR. R. B. JONES, the meat salesman, tight-lipped with anger, pushed his way down through the crowd and wedged himself into a space beside Skates Kelsey.

"A dirty trick, Kelsey," he said quietly. "A mean, low-down trick to play. How do you think the kid is going to live this down?"

Skates Kelsey turned slowly and stared at Mr. Jones. "Whaddaya mean?"

"You know as well as I do that the kid hasn't any more chance of catching on with the Chiefs than I have. How's he going to feel when you duck out of town and he finds that it was all a gag and that there isn't even a try-out in it for him?"

"And what makes you so sure it's a gag, mister?"

"Because I know hockey and hockey players," snapped Jones. "Because I got a wire from Harron yesterday, asking me to stop off here and look at this find of yours."

Kelsey's eyes bulged. "You— Harron sent you?"

"Harron thought you were pulling a fast one, but he didn't want to take any chances. He told me to look at the kid and send him on down for a try-out if it was on the level. And to send you along with him."

"But listen," spluttered Kelsey, "you haven't seen him go. He's been under wraps. On account of maybe Carter tryin' to grab him for the Wings."

"Don't give me that," replied Jones, scornfully. "Think I was born yesterday? I'm Jones, of the Jones Packing Co. Maybe you've heard of my team, the Packers, one of the best industrial teams in the country. I've had a box seat at the Chiefs' games for five years. I don't have to look at a punk for more than two periods to know he's a punk."

Mr. Jones turned away from the frantic Kelsey. "I've seen all I care to see of this game. Too bad you gypped yourself out of that ticket back home, smart guy," he flung back.

"Wait a minute!" bleated Kelsey.

But the fans were returning to their seats as the teams came back on the ice. As Kelsey floundered in pursuit, he was buffeted this way and that by the crowd.

By the time he reached the head of the aisle, he had lost Jones in the confusion.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SECRET'S OUT

JUST before Tim Cardigan left the dressing room, he took a last look at the fine new club bag and at the magnificent gold watch the people of Wheelsburg had given him. He got all choked up when he thought of the faith and affection those gifts represented.

"Look after 'em for me, will you, Bill?" he asked Parkes, the rink manager.

"I'll lock them in the office." The manager's voice seemed strained.

Tim could sense that Parkes was disappointed in him. This benefit game was to have been a triumph for Tim.

"I'll make it up to 'em," Tim promised himself silently as he skated out, "when I'm playing with the Chiefs."

And yet, as the third period got under way, he couldn't help feeling that he was making a poor return to Wheelsburg right now. The watch and the club bag were from his home-town folks, to remind him always of their loyalty. And he was letting them down.

Leask, of the Bombers, was coming down the boards slowly with the puck. Impulsively, Tim stepped in, his stick flashed out and back as he hooked the puck from Leask's stick. Leask whipped in again and bumped him; bumped him hard and savagely. Tim lost his footing and went down. Leask snapped up the puck, grinning, and streaked away.

"Aw, Tim!" shrilled a youngster along the rail. "Don't let him get away with that."

Tim was on his feet. Maybe Kelsey was a smart hockey man, but he didn't know everything. You didn't have to let your own crowd down and let yourself be kicked around by a second-rate barnstormer as the price of getting into

the big time. If that was the price, he'd rather stay in Wheelsburg.

Tim lit out after Leask, caught up with him inside the blue line, harried him, chased him over to the boards, into a corner, and wound up by intercepting Leask's attempted pass to the Bomber center.

There was a scattering of applause from some of the Wheelsburg crowd. So far as Tim Cardigan was concerned, that applause was like a spark to gunpowder.

"To heck with Kelsey! If he doesn't like it, he can lump it. I'd rather stay in Wheelsburg and know they like me, than make the big time and know I let Wheelsburg down."

He swooped out from behind the net, traveling fast, and cut back to his own wing. For the first time that evening he let himself go. He hit the blue line flying. The Bombers, who had long since decided that Tim Cardigan had neither speed nor ability, were caught flat-footed.

A pass to his own center as he crossed the Bomber blue line. He shifted around the defense, but the Wheelsburg center's pass was short. Tim had to swoop back for it. He beat a defense man to the disk by an eyelash.

The Bombers were all back now, trying to break it up, but he fenced and side-stepped his way through a maze of clashing sticks, trying to get in position for a shot.

He lost the puck, dove after it, regained it again and in the same movement saw an opening as a pair of struggling players lunged over from in front of the net. Tim let go with a flick of the wrists. The puck bounced into the twine off the toe of the goalie's boot.

WHEELSBURG had something to cheer for at last. Wheelsburg came to its feet with a mighty roar. That was what they had been waiting for.

Tim Cardigan was tingling with pleasure as he skated back with the loyal cheers of the home-town folks in his ears. Why, he'd rather have Wheelsburg cheers than the applause of all the crowds in the big time! He caught a glimpse of Dave Carter's astonished face as Carter gaped at him from the Bomber bench.

"Attaboy, Tim!" screeched one of the kids in the end balcony near the mechanical organ. "You were just foolin' 'em all the time!"

The Bombers thought it was just a flash in the pan. But after the face-off, they learned different. Their center man won the draw and tried to take the puck down, but Tim Cardigan swooped across from the wing, stick low on the ice, body crouched.

The Bomber center figured Leask was wide open for a pass and he tried it. But the long Cardigan arm and the long Cardigan stick and the Cardigan speed broke up that effort.

Tim Cardigan's stick deflected the puck down the ice and then he was after it like a greyhound, darting through the gap between wing and center.

He was thundering down on the defense while the Bomber forwards were still turning in their tracks. And this time, his savage shot from outside was a blistering high drive for the upper corner of the net.

And the goalie, who hadn't been worried by any real Cardigan shots for two periods, was just a fraction of a second too slow judging it. The puck was in the net before he could even make a play.

And then Wheelsburg really opened up and cheered!

The goal didn't matter; the score didn't matter. What mattered was that Tim Cardigan was honestly doing his stuff. They were still roaring when the referee faced off again. And when the Bombers pulled up their socks and pitched in to find an honest-to-goodness

hockey game on their hands instead of a walk-over, the fur began to fly.

The Wheelsburg team rallied behind Tim Cardigan, who was flashing up and down that right lane as if trying to make up for lost time. He tied Leask into knots every time the Bomber wing tried to break away. He led Wheelsburg on rush after rush against the astonished visitors, the spearhead of the attack—a two-way player, able to bring the puck down and stop it coming back.

Dave Carter told his center to help Leask stop the tornado that had broken out so surprisingly on the wing. And with two Bombers hanging onto him, Tim grinned and began feeding the puck to his uncovered center. That paved the way for another rush.

AT the halfway mark, with bumps aplenty being handed out, and the Bombers driven back on their heels, Tim Cardigan shook himself loose from two Bombers who were trying to bottle him up behind the Bomber net. He pulled out of it, shifted, waited for another Bomber to come in after him, and then he slipped a wide pass out to young Mike.

The way was wide open. Young Mike Cardigan jumped in like an owl after a mouse and banged it home for the third goal.

Wheelsburg went wild.

"By gosh, he was just kiddin' 'em along, all those first two periods!" declared Wheelsburg fans joyously.

And as the Wheelsburg team hit its stride again behind the flying Tim, the Bombers began to fade.

"You can't hold that one-man gang!" panted Leask, scrambling in for a rest. "What was the matter with him those other two periods? That's what I'd like to know."

"I'd like to know, too," grunted Dave Carter, his face cloudy.

He watched one of his defense men

try to slow Tim Cardigan up with a body check and saw Cardigan fade away from it so neatly that the defense man went sprawling. The goalie lunged out to make a stop, and hung onto the puck. The whistle blew for a face-off.

Dennis Cardigan sent out his subs. But Tim waved the relief right-winger back.

"Beat it. I'm playin' the whole period!"

It was as if a great weight had been taken off his back. Tim Cardigan was playing his own game and he was going to pack as much of it into twenty minutes as he could.

As for Skates Kelsey, his face was gray and flabby as he stood near one of the exits. Kelsey was seeing the prize find of the season slipping out of his fingers.

"Yes, sir," muttered Kelsey, "the cat's outa the bag now. Carter will have him signed up before the night's out. And me, the guy who found him, without a thin dime to pay my hotel bill!"

Someone grabbed Kelsey's arm. "I don't often apologize to people," said a clipped, familiar voice. "Because I'm not often wrong. But this time—"

Kelsey looked down. Mr. R. B. Jones, pale and excited, was standing beside him.

"Holy cats!" yelled R. B. Jones suddenly. "If it hadn't been that there was such a crowd here that I couldn't find my way out, I'd have missed it! Under wraps, you said. I'll say he was under wraps! Why, that boy is the best right-wing prospect I've looked at in years!"

Skates Kelsey sagged with relief. "Yeah," he said weakly. "That's what I tried to tell Harron."

"Where's the nearest phone?" demanded R. B. Jones. "I'm gonna get Harron on long-distance right away. This time, we'll both tell him!"

.400 EATERS

BY ROYAL HALL

AUTHOR OF "SKATING FOOL," ETC.

**THEY ATE, AND THEY ATE!
THEY LEFT NARY A LOADED PLATE.
BUT WHEN THE GAME WAS ON,
THEN THE FUN BEGAN!**



.400 Eaters

YEAH, we get a lot of laughs up here in the Big Show, and I guess I've had my share in the fourteen years I've been with the Sharks. Maybe I'm one of the laughs myself, though at least I've hung onto a job, which is more than some of the fellows can say.

Of course, I'm much too old these days for active service; but, as long as I stay in good with Charley Gleason, the boss, he'll probably keep me hired. All I do is pitch to the batters in practice; but shucks, it's a living.

My name is Jack McQuade, and this is the last time you'll hear me mention that name, for I play no vital part in the story to follow. I'm passing the story along because, to a guy who hasn't heard the yarn, it may be good for a chuckle or two. It happened some years ago, and it has to do with eating. That and a kid named Vance.

But first, perhaps I'd better go into the build-up. Most of you know that the Sharks are a pretty good club. Once in a while, they even come through with a big-league pennant. But several years ago, the manager, Charley Gleason, was having his troubles. Not because the Sharks were overfierce; they weren't, at the time. The plain truth was, a few of the fellows were sharks in another respect. I mean, when it came to the feed bag.

It finally got so bad that some of the first-flight eaters commenced to look like Berkshire hogs. They bulged at the middle, they bulged at the rump, and some of 'em got so slow, they couldn't reach first on a two-base hit.

We had no players who batted .400 or anywhere near it. But, as one of the sports reporters was quick to point out, we had some guys who should certainly bat .400 at meal time—regular .400 eaters, they were.

Well, along about June in the year I'm speaking of, Gleason, the manager, got pretty sore. He put those two-legged hogs on a sort of a diet. Whenever he could, he watched their eats himself, and he made 'em lay off the midday lunches entirely.

Now, as you can imagine, that was a hard rule to inforce. Half our games were played at home, and, of course, when the team was home, the players were scattered all over the city and ate where they chose. But on the road it was different. All of us stayed at the same hotel when the squad was off on a trip, and Gleason could check on the fellows more easily.

Somehow, I'll never forget the day that Charley announced his no-lunch edict. Good old Charley Gleason—white-haired, pale-eyed, built like a barrel. A kindlier soul has never been known to the game; but Charley, at times, could be harder than nails, when he wanted to be. Those ball players knew it.

Said Gleason, surveying his beef trust: "Fellows, a few of you guys'd look good in a fat men's race. But this ain't a fat men's race. Nor is it a race for the title of champion eater. It's baseball."

He paused for a moment, then quickly resumed.

"Hereafter, we're cuttin' out lunches. You babies'll eat a good breakfast. But need I say 'good'? I needn't. You'll eat in the morning. You won't touch anything else till after the game. That's *orders*. A chocolate cream or a steak, it makes no difference. I catch you guys imbibin' lunch, an' I fine you plenty! That's all!"

MOST of the outfit took it with pretty good grace. But there were a couple who didn't. They squawked. The couple were big Fred Harrow, a pitcher, and Kolb, a fly-chaser. These two hollered to

heaven, and threatened to appeal to Judge Landis or somethin'.

Charley was firm. Finally, both of the grumblers subsided. But neither was happy, you betcha. Remember their names. They were Harrow and Kolb; you'll hear more about 'em later.

In early July, we took to the road for the longest trip of the year. We were due to be gone for three weeks. The Sharks, at the time, were draggin' along in seventh position, and looked pretty rank.

Our eaters weren't helping us much, except at the table, and Gleason was badly in need of reserves. The infield was shot, the outfield no better. The team wasn't hitting. So Charley sent down to a Double-A farm, a club in our chain-store system, for needed assistance.

I roomed with Gleason, and he confided his plans.

"We're bringin' up young Bill Vance," he told me. "A sweet utility player, they say. He's hittin' .380 in Double-A ball, and'll probably do us some good."

I'd heard of Bill Vance. The kid was one of those versatile guys. He was supposed to be a natural first sacker, but could be shifted around to almost any spot in the infield or outfield. Me, I'd never laid eyes on the kid, and neither had Gleason. But, from the weekly reports that had come from our chain-store system, we judged he was ready for big-league ball.

The youngster joined the club the second day of our road trip; or, to be more accurate, the second *night* of our road trip. His train got in at half past eight, and he came direct to the big hotel where the boys were stabled.

Now, there wasn't any earthquake that night he came, but I almost *thought* there was, for that's how much of a shock I got when I saw the kid. That went for Gleason, too. You should 'a' seen Charley's face!

This youngster, Vance, was a physi-

SPO—6A

cal freak, almost. Six feet tall, he looked all arms and legs. His paws were huge, which was good. His feet were huge, which possibly wasn't so good. But the rest of him—wow!

The kid was as thin as a rail, or at least he appeared that way in his store clothes. Why, I'd 'a' sworn that he hadn't been fed in a month, if it weren't for the fact that he'd come from a Double-A ball club.

Wide, gray eyes were set in a long, cadaverous face, and his cheeks were so hollow they looked like pockets. The rookie had tousy hair, but you noticed that last. It was the only thing about him that didn't have a starved appearance. The cut of his face was wholly in keeping with the rest of him. Sad? That face looked *mournful!*

But, when he smiled—which he finally did—it proved he was human. The smile was born when Gleason mentioned breakfast.

"Vance," said Charley, when he could finally trust himself to speak, "you'll room in three hundred and eight to-night. In the mornin', git up whenever y' choose, and eat your breakfast."

That's when the youngster smiled. So help me, he smiled so big that his ears commenced to wiggle.

"Breakfast!" the newcomer sighed, with a reverent glow in his eyes. "But say. I just got in. I ain't had supper. Ain't I entitled to—"

Charley shot a glance my way, and I looked at the ceiling and started to whistle a tune.

"The hotel dining room's closed!" Charley snapped.

Young Vance's face got sad all over again.

BUT Gleason was curious. "Say," the skipper asked, permitting his eyes to wander over the rook's lean frame, "when did you eat last, anyhow?"

"Well," the kid confessed, "along in

the afternoon, about five o'clock, I had a little snack on the train. But, heck, y'can't expect a steak an' potatoes an' salad an' pie to last a fellow the rest of his *life*. I can't play ball on an empty stummick."

Gleason half choked. "There ain't no game *tonight*," he gurgled. "We play in the daytime. Go ter yer room and get some sleep!"

Charley looked at me and caught my eye. Man, oh, man!

The following morning, I happened to be at the trough when the youngster, Vance, came in for his breakfast.

"I ain't very hungry," the lean one greeted me. "Never have much of a yen in the mornin'. It's funny. What've we got on the menu?"

"Order whatever y'want," I told him. "That's what most of us do. Y'see, we don't eat lunch, so we fill our tanks at breakfast."

"Wh-*what*?" gasped Vance. "Y'mean, we don't have nothin' at *noon*?"

He grabbed the menu. "Sliced bananas," he said to the waiter. "Some oatmeal an' ham. Four eggs, fried hard. Some toast an' preserves an' coffee."

The waiter was blinking. No more than I, however.

"One order of toast?" said the waiter.

Vance was thoughtful. "Bring me eight good slices," he finally answered. "Is that one order?"

"No, sir. That's four orders."

"O. K. Do your stuff."

And fry me in oil if it isn't the truth: the youngster not only *ate* that meal, and ate it with relish, but actually ordered some cinnamon buns for dessert.

The kid had a bottomless pit in his belly, no less!

I've already mentioned Fred Harrow, the pitcher, and Kolb, the fly-chaser. Harrow and Kolb were the fellows who'd grumbled so hard when Gleason, the skipper, put into effect that no-lunch rule. As luck—bad luck—would have it, the two were there at

the breakfast table when young Bill Vance was doing his chore with the knife, the spoon, and the fork.

They eyed young Vance. "Damn good goin'," growled Harrow, a bull of a man who rippled the scales at a cool two thirty. "You better stoke up while y'can. They starve us guys from now till supper."

"Yeah," said Kolb, the fielder. Kolb was shorter than Harrow, but almost his equal in tonnage. "You better eat hearty. This chiselin' outfit ain't too free with the grub."

At that, young Vance's face grew troubled and sad. "I got to have my vitamin foods," he mourned. "I can't play ball on an empty stummick."

THAT same day, Vance was given his opening dose of the no-lunch ruling. Noontime came, but that's about all it amounted to—noontime. Food was being dispensed all over the country, but not to the Sharks.

We were playing the Colts, that day, on the Colts' home grounds. We put Bill Vance in a monkey suit, which didn't improve his spirits. By two o'clock, the rook was the saddest critter in half a dozen counties.

"I'm shaky," he'd moan. "I'm dizzy. I get these spells when I don't have food!"

Charley Gleason told the kid to button his trap and play first base. First was one of the spots where the club was weakest, and Gleason wanted the rookie to break right in. We needed that slugging of his—that .380 hitting he'd done in the minors.

But history proves that the kid struck out three times, that afternoon; was caught off base when given a life on an error, and bungled two grounders. He looked so bad that Gleason was having delirium tremens before it was over.

And that was only the bare beginning. Gleason tried him at second and short,

in the next few days, and finally third. The net results were exactly zero minus. The rook looked worse and worse as time went on, and Gleason was gnashing his teeth and going around with a "Why-did-this-happen-to-me?" expression.

Vance had only one alibi. Give the youngster credit, he stuck to his story.

"I need three meals a day!" he'd yelp. "I can't go into a game with an empty stummick an' play good ball!"

And again: "Food's a producer of energy. Look at the things them Yale professors discovered. They claim a guy should eat whenever he feels his energy oozin' away."

Gleason was cold to the argument. College professors meant nothing to Charley. It made no difference whether they hailed from Princeton, Yale, Muskingum, or Slippery Rock. Charley was sot in his ways. No lunch for Vance or anyone else.

Now, I've seldom known Gleason to make a mistake. He boots very few. But in this case, something told me that possibly—yes, just *possibly*—Gleason was wrong. There *are* some guys who need more energy foods than others. Maybe this Vance was one of them.

But Charley couldn't see it that way. "Have you ever watched him put away a *breakfast* or a supper?" he asked me. "Why, he eats more grub in a day than most of us do in a week!"

The club, as a whole, had always done well in the "Appetite League." But Vance was breaking all records; was making the erstwhile champions, Harrow and Kolb, look insignificant by contrast. Vance, as an eater, could put 'em both under the table and still be ready for more at the end of the bout.

And the funny thing was, he didn't gain weight. He was one of those bean-pole types, and the calories didn't affect him. He ate, and he ate, and he ate, and still, at the end of a week, he didn't appear to have gained one surplus ounce.

But he wasn't going well on the baseball diamond. Stubbornly, he clung to his story. The gist of the story was always the same: "I can't play ball without no lunch. I need them vitamins!"

FINALLY, after a terrible day at bat and afield, the kid grew pretty defiant. As I remember, it came to a head in the locker room. The team was still on the road, and the Sharks had lost that afternoon, which wasn't at all unusual.

Gleason was giving young Vance the works for missing a sign. The youngster turned, and he glared at the boss with a sudden display of temper.

"What the hell!" he barked. "You're tryin' to starve me to death, and still you're sore when I ain't no ball of fire. By thunder, Gleason, hereafter I'm gonna eat lunch an' you ain't gonna stop me!"

Off in a corner, I saw Fred Harrow and Kolb perk up. If Vance got by with a thing like this, why couldn't they, too? Without being overbright, I could see how their minds were running.

Gleason, the skipper, was looking at Vance and debating. I knew what Charley was asking himself. Should he fine the kid for sassin' him back or let things lay?

As I've mentioned before, Gleason's a pretty good egg—and Vance, at the time, was new to the Sharks.

So Charley finally said: "A crack like that'll cost ya dough in the future, Vance. I'm lettin' it pass for once, but mind your manners!"

So Vance kept still. But he looked plumb mad, and his eyes still gleamed with that meal-time fervor.

The trip was going from bad to worse. The following day, we opened against the champion Hawks in a four-game series. We figured we'd do pretty well if

we took one game, for the Hawks were tough that year.

The skipper had shaken up his batting list. At a matter of fact, he had shaken up his whole line-up. This afternoon I'm speaking of, he was trying Bill Vance at an outfield post. So far, the youngster hadn't been worth two hoots and a holler; but Gleason wasn't the type to give up so easily. Gleason kept thinking that maybe the kid'd produce, if he ever got vitamins off of his mind for an hour or two.

So Vance was put in center, which was usually Joe Kolb's pasture. Kolb was shifted to left for the afternoon.

I cracked to Gleason: "Why not put Fred Harrow in right? I know he's a pitcher, but what's the dif? With Fred in right, Vance in center, and Kolb in left, we'd have the heaviest-eating outfield in the majors!"

Not so funny? Gleason didn't think so, either.

Well, in the game that day, the champions gave us a beating, 10-3. That wasn't so much of a shock. But the game was not without its surprises. The main surprise was this: Young Vance got two clean hits, drove in all three of our runs, and engineered some catches in center that made our eyes bug out.

For no apparent reason, the kid had arrived with a bang!

LATER, in the clubhouse, I was talking to him. Kolb and Harrow and some of the others were also there. I said to the youngster:

"Nice work, Vance. Y'really went to the races today."

"Yeah," he answered. "I always do when I ain't deprived of my calories. Energy—that's what I need. And energy comes from *food!*"

I saw Joe Kolb and Harrow prick up their ears. "Whaddaya mean?" I grunted. "Y'mean—"

Gleason wasn't around. He was down at the opposite end of the room.

So Charley failed to hear the kid's answer to my question, though Vance was making no effort to lower his voice.

"I mean," said Vance, as bold as brass, "that I et myself some lunch today, at my own expense. I went to a joint not far from the ball park here, and I ordered some soup and a steak and some candied yams."

I whistled softly, meanwhile glancing at Harrow and Kolb, who were drinking it in. I said to the kid:

"If the boss finds out—"

"I didn't hear him kickin' none about them hits I made," the kid cut in. "I played good ball today because I *felt* all right; an' I felt all right because I *et*. Yestiddy afternoon, I told him I was gonna eat lunch in the future an' he wasn't gonna stop me. Well, he thought I was bluffin'. I wasn't. I can't play ball—"

"On an empty stummick!" I finished.



Young Vance got two clean hits, and drove in all three of our runs.

That night, I was loungin' around the hotel room with the boss. I think I mentioned before that we bunked together. At half past eight, somebody knocked at the door.

Gleason rumbled, "Come in." The door swung open. I made a wry face. The guy who had knocked was Harrow, the pitcher; and Kolb was right at his side.

The two came in. I figured I knew what was up. I was right.

"Boss," said Harrow, "I s'pose you seen how good that rookie went this afternoon."

"I'm not blind," snapped Gleason.

Harrow looked at Kolb, then back at the skipper. "The reason he went so good was because of the lunch he ate," said Harrow. "He told us so himself. It gave him some pep. Now look. If it works that way for *him*, it'll work for others."

Gleason turned and stared my way, as if to ask: "Did *you* know this?"

But right about then, I was very, very busy reading the evening paper. I thought, of course, that Gleason would hit the ceiling. To my surprise, he didn't. He walked to a chair, sat down, and appeared to be thinking. He finally said, in the sweetest possible tone:

"So the kid went out and inhaled some grub at noon, and he has a good day. So *you* two guys, you're thinkin' you oughta come up an' demand the same. is that it?"

Fred Harrow's jaw stuck out. But Kolb was the one who answered.

"Yeah," he said. "That's it. And it ain't only us. A lot of the fellows figger you ain't been treatin' 'em right when it comes to the chow. So Harrow and me, we thought we'd—"

"Yes, I see," interrupted Gleason. His voice was smooth as silk.

KOLB was stretching the truth, as I happened to know. A few of the players had grumbled, at first, when the no-lunch rule went into effect. But, as a whole, they had taken the order in stride; and after awhile, they'd accepted it peacefully. Harrow and Kolb were the only exceptions—I mean, of the veterans.

True, young Vance had been kicking, and kicking like hell; but Vance was too new to be counted a veteran.

Charley Gleason pursed his lips; and then, to my amazement, Charley said, in a tone devoid of excitement or rancor:

"Maybe you birds are right. Maybe there *are* cases where a feller needs a little somethin' to bolster up his innards at noon. Maybe I *have* been wrong, at least in spots. So whaddaya say, you guys? Tomorrow, we'll all have lunch together. You"—looking at Harrow and Kolb—"an' me, an' young Bill Vance. How's that?"

I nearly fell dead when I heard Charley say that. But so did those other two guys. They hadn't expected as easy a triumph as *this*.

"You—you're on the level?" Harrow stammered.

"Of course," said Gleason smoothly. "You an' Kolb an' Vance an' me. We'll eat together at noon tomorrow. Is it a date?"

The husky callers nodded. They grinned delightedly. Then, with the grins still creasing their faces, they left. The fort had been captured as easy as that. Not a shot had been fired.

"Wh-what," I gasped when the door had closed behind the pair, "wha-what's got into you, Charley? You mean, you're actually gonna permit—"

"I'm not in the habit of foolin'," finished Gleason. He reached for the evening paper, studied the weather predictions. "Fair tomorrow," he read, "with gradually mounting temperatures in the coastal regions. West and central areas, possible thunderstorms toward night-fall."

Charley was humming a bar of a song.

"But what the hell!" I popped. "I don't see—"

"No?" the boss retorted. "Now that's too bad. Suppose you join us at lunch tomorrow yourself. You're not *required* to come, but you can if y'wanta. The check's on me."

I WAS there, all right. Not that I was hungry, but simply curious. Man, I was burning alive to see what Gleason was up to. Harrow and Kolb showed up on the dot. Young

Vance did, too, for Gleason had taken the trouble to ask him. None of the rest of the squad were invited, just Harrow and Kolb and Vance and Gleason and me.

In the hotel dining room, Gleason had a table set apart. Well, it was shortly after twelve o'clock when the five of us got together for lunch.

"Boy, oh, boy, I'm starved!" said Vance. The rook was licking his chops. "I ain't had nothing to eat since breakfast!"

"Pal," said Harrow, "I think I can fondle a morsel myself!"

Kolb just nodded and rubbed his hands.

We all sat down, and Gleason summoned the waiter. The orgy began. And, friend, when I say orgy, that's what I mean. First, there were platters heaped high with *antipasto*. That was a meal in itself. Then a thick soup, and spaghetti and cheese, followed at once by a gluttonous helping of fresh-killed pork, with gravy to match.

But that wasn't all. There were mountainous baked potatoes, and corn, and salad. Last, as a coup de grâce, came hot mince pie—and *what* mince pie!

How did I know? I could tell by the smell. The smell was all I could take. I'd laid down my implements halfway through the spaghetti course. That was as far as I got—the spaghetti.

But Harrow and Kolb and Vance just ate on and on. Toward the finish, Harrow and Kolb were tiring. Not Vance. He was eating them under the table, as always.

Gleason was beaming. "Stow it away," he urged them. "Stow it away. The chef'll be hurt if there's anything left."

I happened to glance at my watch. "Hep! It's gettin' along toward game time, Charley," I said to the boss.

The skipper was undisturbed. "I told the rest of the fellows to go to the park,"

he answered. "I told 'em we might be late. Maybe we'd better get movin', at that."

"Just one more piece of that pie!" begged Vance. "In all my life, I never et pie that hit the spot like this one done!"

THE five of us got to the park as the rest of the team were starting their fielding drill. It was hot, at the park—terrifically hot. The sun beat down with an angry and wicked intensity, scorching our hides.

And the weather was humid—so sticky and muggy, our uniforms clung to our backs like flypaper. Moving around was an effort, and running—well, running was *cruel*. I pitied the fellows who had to go out in that blistering heat for a full nine innings.

One of the first things Gleason did was to order Fred Harrow into the bull pen.

"Start your limberin' up," said Gleason. "You're workin' today."

"B-but," Harrow protested, "it ain't time *yet*."

"You need more limberin' up than the rest of the pitchers," Charley said sweetly. "Do as I tell you."

So Harrow got hold of his glove and commenced to warm up. His face was as long as his arm. The next thing Gleason did was to send Bill Vance and Kolb to the outfield.

"Now," said Gleason, smiling grimly, "the fun begins!"

He picked up a bat, and started to rocket some flies to the far, far corners. The first one sailed beyond Joe Kolb, and Joe went sauntering after it. Gleason dropped his bat and strolled halfway to the outfield.

"Kolb!" I heard him bellow. "What the hell you think this is? I want some pep out there. Now hustle!"

Charley grabbed his bat again, and hoisted another long fly that was well

beyond the fielder. Kolb went after it—not too eagerly.

“O. K., mister,” Gleason hollered. “That’ll cost ya five out of your pay check. Try it again. If y’loaf, it’ll cost you *another* five bucks!”

Kolb likes his money as well as the next one. So, when Gleason started bombarding the fence with fungo flies, there was nothing for Kolb to do but chase them, or lose his salary check in fines.

Gleason shagged him back to the wall three times, and Kolb began to sweat and puff. He also rubbed his stomach a little. Charley Gleason smiled.

“Vance,” the skipper yelled, “this next fly’s yours!”

Charley socked a long line drive to deep left center. But quick as a flash Vance was after it. Sprinting, the kid got hold of the ball with the web of his glove, and the onion stuck. Cool as ice, the rookie threw to the plate with as pretty a heave as I’d seen in many a day.

Gleason looked puzzled. He tried Bill Vance again, and again the rookie came through with a long, hard run and a beautiful catch.

GLEASON mumbled something; shifted back to Kolb. The next few minutes were pitiful, really—for Kolb, at least. Time and again, the skipper drove the ball just out of his reach; and if Kolb didn’t hustle, Gleason would threaten to fine him.

Suddenly, Kolb began to hold his belly again and swallow hard. I knew, right off, that nature was taking its course. The blistering heat, and the running around, and the dinner he’d eaten—well, you guessed it. Kolb was sick and getting sicker.

Gleason gave me the bat. “You keep them guys in motion,” he ordered. “You make ’em run their heads off, chasin’ flies. I see my other duckling needs attention!”

Orders are orders. I took the bat

and started rappin’ fungos, all directed at Kolb and Vance. But in between the shots, I was keeping my eye on Gleason. The boss had walked to the bull pen, where Harrow, the pitcher, was lobbing ’em in.

“Come on, quit clownin’!” Gleason yelled at Harrow. “Bear down. Let’s see some *stuff*!”

“But it’s hot as the devil,” Harrow argued, “an’ I’m savin’ my stuff for the *game*.”

“Harrow,” said Charley, “so far as I know, I’m still the boss of the works in these here parts. I said bear down, an’ I mean bear down!”

So Harrow began to cut loose to the bull-pen catcher. The sweat was rolling off of his brow. In a very few minutes, the chucker was swallowing hard, like Kolb. Harrow looked mighty unhappy.

Well, at the boss’ orders, I was spreading unhappiness myself. I had Joe Kolb on the ropes, from chasing those fungos. But try as I might, I couldn’t make even a dent in the cool composure of young Bill Vance. Unlike Joe Kolb, the rookie was dragging ’em down from far and near, and he seemed to be really *enjoying* the work-out.

When at last the boys came in to the bench, young Vance was still unruffled. But Kolb and Harrow looked ghastly. Their faces were pale; their eyes were glazed and dull. It was clear that a couple of dinners were soon going to decorate the landscape.

“Hm-m-m!” said Gleason. “What’s wrong with you two guys? Maybe you need some energy foods. Now, how about a nice pork sandwich?”

That’s when the landscape was decorated. Then and there.

Gleason turned to Vance. “How about *you*?” said Charley. “Could you go a pork sandwich? Or a piece of mince pie?”

“*Could I!*” chirped the rookie. His

face was wreathed in smiles. "Boys, lemme at it!"

Charley Gleason frowned. Things were going according to schedule with Harrow and Kolb. But not with Vance.

Of course, I was hep by now. I saw, too, why the boss had been interested in the mounting temperatures that he'd read about in the paper. Charley wanted to make those guys so sick that the subject of lunch would never be mentioned again. Harrow and Kolb were that sick *now*. But Vance was crossing the skipper.

THE boss made Kolb and Harrow start the game, Kolb in the outfield, Harrow as pitcher. Vance was also in there, playing center, and how that beanpole rookie had to *work!*

You see, the champion Hawks shelacked Fred Harrow for sixteen hits in the first eight frames, and a lot of those hits were extra baggers. The score at the end of the eighth was Hawks 12, Sharks 1.

But Gleason was not to be swayed from his main idea. He made Fred Harrow stay in, and he made Joe Kolb stay in, though both were the color of chalk and sicker than dogs. He also kept Bill Vance in the slaughter.

Vance, however, serene and calm, was taking the gaffing and asking for more. Unlike the others, the rookie was playing the game of his life, and Gleason was baffled, and stumped, and a little bit riled. You see, when Charley sets his mind to a definite purpose, he's apt to be griped if it doesn't work out as he plans.

Came the first of the ninth. Harrow was due to lead off, but even with the score what it was, Gleason wouldn't insert a pinch hitter. Weakly, Harrow advanced to the plate and grounded to third, but was safe on a bobble. Kolb, at the top of the batting order, dragged

himself from the dugout; he got on when an inside fast one clipped him.

Both those fellows were groaning. The last thing in the world they wanted to do was run the bases.

Two men fled to the outfield. But, with Harrow and Kolb still on, and both half dead, young Vance stepped up for his licks. The youngster walloped a clean two-bagger to left. Harrow came staggering in with a run, and Kolb did, too—from first. Gleason was coaching at third, and he wouldn't let Kolb rein up at the hot-corner station.

I climbed from the dugout. So did a couple of others. We had to assist Joe Kolb to the bench, and Harrow was nearly as bad.

Fred Harrow moaned: "If anybody—ever mentions f-food again—"

He never finished. For Kolb had strength enough to mutter: "So help me, Fred. Shut up, or I'll nick yer head with a bat fer *s-sayin'* that word!"

Meanwhile, Vance, the rookie, was camped on second. I glanced at the boss, who was giving the signs from the third-base coacher's box. The skipper's chin was stuck way out, and his eyes were gleaming. Those eyes were fastened on Vance, and I saw Charley signal a steal; a *steal*, of *all* things!

Rubbing it in? I'll say the boss was rubbing it in! He was making this one last effort to punish the kid, as he'd punished the others. Was making him steal, after seeing him run like hell on that double.

Vance accepted the sign, and I'll be damned if the kid didn't come thundering into the hot corner, safe by a yard, on the first ball pitched! He was grinning. He derricked himself from the ground, then dusted his pants. The ball was returned to the pitcher.

"Ain't you . . . ain't you feelin' even a *little* bit squeamish?" I heard Gleason ask him.

BUT Vance appeared to ignore that query. The kid was leading off third, was watching the pitcher; was inching, step by step, away from the cushion. Back in the dugout, I looked at the pitcher myself. But then, as the moundsman started his wind-up, a gray-clad cyclone suddenly caught my eye, and the cyclone's name was Vance. The youngster had lowered his head; was digging his cleats in the turf of the base line, sprinting like mad. I nearly collapsed. That unpredictable rookie—that crazy, lean-limbed scarecrow, Vance—was breaking for home!

Some fifteen feet from the plate, he left his feet in a headlong dive. The *plop* of the ball in the backstop's mitt, and the catcher straddled the line in an effort to block him. A geyser of dust and an echoing crash. The catcher went down. For Vance, with a rush and a roar, had come into the plate headfirst, and had blasted the man with the ball clean out of his path.

I saw the umpire's hands go down in the time-honored gesture. His fingers were spread, and his palms were facing the ground.

That madcap rookie was safe. He'd stolen home!

The fact that the run didn't save us from a 12—4 beating is merely incidental. The thing I will never forget was the look that etched itself on Gleason's face.

"I'm licked!" sighed Gleason resignedly, after the game. "The kid's a freak. The kid ain't human. A guy that can massacre food like that guy can, and still play ball! I got to admit, I must 'a' been wrong. Maybe he *does* need dinner at noon, or maybe it's all in the mind. But mind or belly, I'm sure gonna see that he *eats*, as long as he plays the brand of ball he showed today."

Right about then, young Vance went hurrying past on his way to the clubhouse.

"What's the rush?" I called. "The place on fire?"

"Naw," he answered, "but I brought along one of them good mince pies from the hotel dinin' room, an' stowed it in my locker; an' now, if you fellows'll pardon me, I hear that pie a-callin'!"

WHAT'S WRONG WITH BOXING?



There's hardly a big fight that isn't followed by hot arguments. Who is right and who is wrong? Here's inside information by one whose name counts in the fight game.

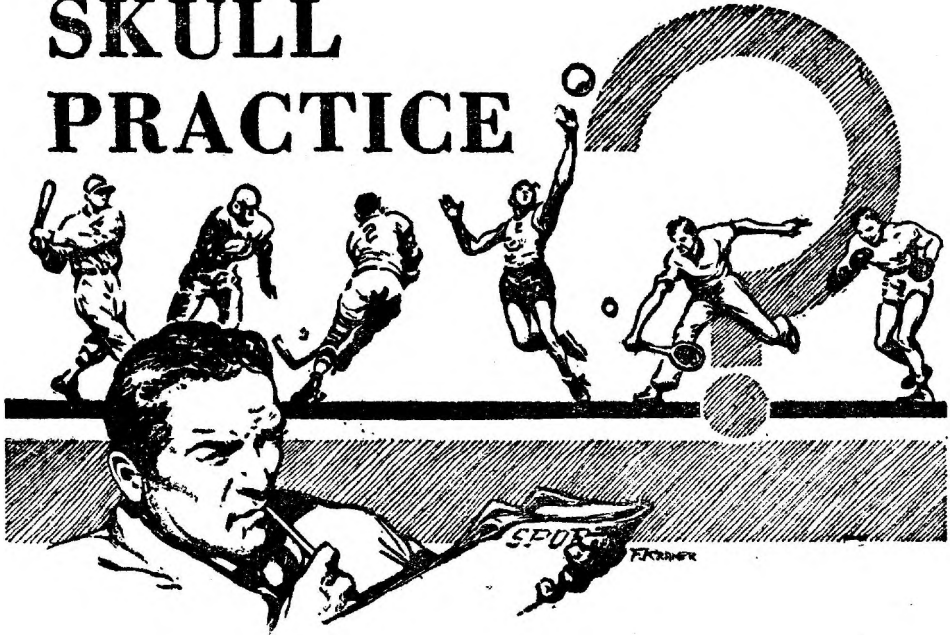
WATCH YOUR STEP IN THE RING

By **BILL BROWN**

Member of the New York State Boxing Commission

In the 2nd March Sport Story Magazine, on sale February 17th

SKULL PRACTICE



Just to give your brains a little different kind of exercise, try your skill with the following Sportsword Puzzle:

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8		9	10	11
12				13						14		
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SPORTSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

- 1 He roots for the team.
- 4 This magazine's specialty.
- 9 A short fly.
- 12 The position of the golf ball.
- 13 Concede the play.
- 14 The Crimson Tide. (abbr.)
- 15 The Great Shires' first name.
- 16 A poor punter. (2 words.)
- 18 Color of the manager's hair.
- 20 A cheer.
- 21 Where tennis umpires rest while they work.
- 23 Where golf matches are played.
- 27 Boxers call an injured eye a bum —.
- 28 A strong football team makes plenty of these.
- 29 A football lineman. (abbr.)
- 30 A university of the Far West. (abbr.)
- 31 Used in many games.
- 32 Toronto Racing Association. (abbr.)
- 33 Universal record. (abbr.)
- 34 Hockey slang word for the goal.
- 35 Schmeling's last showing with Louis.
- 36 What baseball rookies hope to become. (2 words.)
- 38 What makes the grandstand pest noisy.
- 39 First three letters of former lightweight champion's name.
- 40 A baseball team can have only three to an inning.
- 41 What ball players do to draw a fine.
- 45 What golf duffers do to their drives.
- 48 Some English fighters train on this.
- 49 A successful poloist is a good —.
- 50 A storm from this quarter will spoil outdoor sports for days. (abbr.)
- 51 A layer of a baseball.
- 52 It must be good, if we print it.
- 53 What a fighter must have to get a shot at the title. (slang)

DOWN

- 1 A winter paradise for golfers. (abbr.)
- 2 When a rookie doesn't make good, he gets the —.
- 3 Allison beat Perry in '35 with his —. (2 words.)
- 4 A weapon used in fencing.
- 5 To take part in a game.
- 6 A fighter over 30 is —.
- 7 What umpires do to the losing home team.
- 8 What Walter Johnson's teammates rarely made for him. (2 words.)
- 9 Between bases. (noun)
- 10 First name of some Swedish wrestlers.
- 11 It takes a good golfer to equal this.
- 17 They come with the shells.
- 19 Nickname for Miller, football coach of the Naval Academy.
- 21 A hard blow.
- 22 Greb's first name.
- 23 These are the bugaboo of all athletes.
- 24 The Temple U. varsity.
- 25 A misplay.
- 26 In track events, the pistol is the signal to —.
- 28 Sporting slang word denoting excellence.
- 31 They follow the fastest winter sport.
- 32 The trainer's heat lamp. (slang)
- 34 What baseball scouts do to the small leagues.
- 35 Big men are best in the shot —.
- 37 Stengel's nickname.
- 38 Handley Cross can answer this.
- 40 Where all good place kicks go.
- 41 A good eleven will put a small college on the football —.
- 42 The university in Urbana. (abbr.)
- 43 It will fatten the batting average.
- 44 A fuss over the team.
- 46 Number of rounds in the last big heavyweight championship fight.
- 47 A player who lacks this is not much good to the team.

(Solution on page 130)



Whistle Tooter's Woes

By ARTHUR L. RAFTER

I'm sleeping all day in a college town,
Because my brand-new car breaks down.
Then Kelly, my pal, busts in on me,
And says: "You're hooked as a referee
In a basketball game between coed
cuties."

I tell him: "You take those pleasant
duties."

Says Kelly: "I can't. You look like
Grimm,

The basketball star, and I've said you're
him."

Says I: "There's rules, and I don't know
one."

He grins: "You simp; it's only in fun."
When we get to the gym, there's a helluva
crowd,

And the boys and the girls are cheering
loud.

It's a regular game, with a college band!
Then a gang comes up, and they shake
my hand,

And call me Grimm—and that ain't all.
The dames, lined up for basketball,
Are big and homely, an awful mess.

So I'm sending Kelly an S O S,
But he ducks away, with a peach of a gal,
And leaves me flat—and he's my pal!

I go to the center, and toss the ball,
And dodge around, as I bluff and stall,
Till one of the dames gets in my way.

I miss out bad, on a red-hot play.
As the ball is sunk. Then I hear a
howl,

So I blow my whistle, and holler "Foul!"
Then a red-faced moll says: "Who fouled
who?"

That gives me a hunch, and I says: "Why,
you!"

She squawks: "I never touched the cat!"

I says: "Now, cute, don't hand me that!"

She yells: "How dare you call me cute."

Then she's shoved aside by a husky brute,
And before I know it, I get a poke.

Then I swing my right, and I drop the
bloke.

That starts a riot. The crowd gets thick,
But I fight right through it, and beat it
quick

Through a lot of doors, and run like a
hare

To my room—and Kelly's sitting there!
He grins: "The car is fixed, you ham.

And I've packed the bags; so now, let's
scram."

SEAL SKINNED



BY JACK VOLNEY

AUTHOR OF "TEN PINS AND A BALL," ETC.

LULU WAS ONLY A TRAINED SEAL, BUT SHE PLAYED A WINNING PART IN A HARD-FOUGHT WATER-POLO GAME.

Seal Skinned

AS he approached his destination, Gap Twillinger could feel the relentless net of circumstances tighten about him. Cold perspiration moistened his palms and made them slippery upon the steering wheel of the small truck.

He might be a little late to water-polo practice, but that was by no means the thing that caused him consternation now. Gap's worries were all contained in the sizable, sturdy box riding in the rear of the truck. The box was liberally punched with air holes through which a protesting snort could occasionally be heard.

Each snort brought fresh alarm to Gap. It recalled only too clearly his recent moment of weakness; his recent, and probably fateful, excursion into the realms of higher finance. He had allowed sentiment to shoulder aside his common sense, and all this had to be explained to his boss, Zeb Penny, a man with no more sentiment than an oyster.

Upon reaching the community building of which the small city of Martinville was so proud, Gap avoided the front entrance and drove around to the back. He abandoned the truck and its passenger for the time being while he hastened inside in search of moral support.

It was late afternoon, and he found the other members of the water-polo team already on hand at the swimming pool for their daily practice. A swift, worried glance about the pool showed him that Zeb Penny had not yet arrived. It was a temporary reprieve, at any rate, and Gap drew a deep breath into his ample lungs.

He even contrived a grin, of sorts; but then, even Gap's feeblest grin could put the average grin to shame. This was no real fault of Gap's. It was the fault of his mouth—a huge gash of amaz-

ing width, stretching almost from ear to ear.

Gap's somewhat unflattering nickname resulted directly from the size of his mouth. "A gap to rival the Grand Canyon," some clumsy wit had said, but the name had stuck, just the same.

His mouth's bigness did not, oddly enough, detract from his personality. It added, rather, a certain happy-go-lucky element in keeping with his nature and his lively blue eyes. Folks liked him. They couldn't help it.

Tink Jones, the center, was the first to sense Gap's underlying excitement. "What goes on?" he asked, coming up to Gap. "What're you so jittery about?"

"I've got a mascot for us," Gap announced.

That brought the others crowding around. Questions flew.

"A seal," admitted Gap. "Her name's Lulu."

The result was highly gratifying. Not only did the team call themselves the Seals, but their fondest and wildest hope had been to obtain a real live specimen.

They thought Gap was kidding, of course, so he led them out to see for themselves. It was a moment of great triumph; so great, in fact, that Gap temporarily forgot all about his boss, Zeb Penny.

Willing hands lifted the box from the truck and carried it to the pool. Gap tactfully avoided a concise explanation of just how he had come into possession of Lulu. When the pressure got too great, he played his trump card.

"She's been trained to play water polo," he announced proudly. "The guy I got her from told me so."

THIS was almost too much. It was a matter which had to be seen to be believed, and the Seals decided to waste no time in assuring themselves of this astounding fact.

Lulu was released at once. She was

pretty grouchy about the whole thing at first, but as soon as she saw the water, all was forgiven. With a happy *warruff*, she waddled to the edge and took a header.

They tossed her the partially inflated ball, and that pleased her no end. She balanced it on her nose as though experimenting with its weight, then, grabbing it in her mouth, she disappeared.

There were a few moments of tense silence. Then Lulu reappeared once more at the end of the pool. The ball was still in her mouth, and, with a great flourish she touched it to the board for the cleanest goal you ever saw. The Seals burst into a wild roar of applause. And did Lulu eat it up!

She gave an immediate encore, but the team was rudely interrupted. A harsh voice roared out behind them.

"What tomfoolery goes on here?"

The blood froze in Gap's veins. The elation of the moment was suddenly a thing of the past. The reckoning was at hand, and he steeled himself to meet it. He turned to face his employer.

Zeb Penny, proprietor and sole owner of the Penny Hay, Grain & Feed Co., was not a man to inspire fear by means of his physique or general appearance.

Penny was a dapper little man. He was saved from total baldness by a fringe of hair which ran from ear to ear about the circumference of his round head. The coloring of his face was generous, particularly at the moment. It formed a glowing background for Penny's magnificent set of teeth.

Penny was fiercely proud of those teeth, chiefly because of the fact that they'd cost him a lot of money. They stood out like a row of monuments, and, false or not, Penny loved them.

He hadn't, as yet, completely achieved the technical art of keeping them in place. In moments of stress, they were apt to shift position, at which times Penny snapped them back into their

grooves with a quick forward thrust of his head. As far as anyone knew, he was still batting an even thousand. No one had seen him lose them yet.

He had a close call at the moment, though, because he appeared to be really upset. This water-polo team was his chief hobby. He'd organized it, sponsored it, and also contributed largely to its upkeep. It must have given him a shock to see Lulu disporting herself in the pool which should have contained his team.

"What goes on here?" he repeated hoarsely.

"It . . . it's our new mascot," stammered Gap.

"So-o-o," drawled Penny. "Your new mascot, eh? And just where, might I inquire, did you acquire that beast?"

This was the moment Gap had feared. He summoned his waning courage and said: "I got her from the circus."

Quick suspicion flared in Penny's eyes. He was a shrewd man, and his mind worked fast. "I see," he said quietly. "A mangy, one-ring circus comes to Martinville and makes its winter quarters here. I sell 'em one hundred dollars' worth of feed. I send you down to collect the bill. What happens?"

"Well, look, Mr. Penny," said Gap desperately. "They went bankrupt. They couldn't pay a cent. It happened all of a sudden, and all the townsfolk'll have to accept their animals and equipment for pay."

"And you picked out a seal?" asked Penny, with quiet menace.

"But the man swore it was worth five hundred bucks," insisted Gap.

Penny opened his mouth too fast and had to snap for his teeth. "Tomorrow," he said, "you'll take it back and trade it for a horse. Now get that beast out of there and start your practice."

GAP was glad to get off that easy, even though he knew that the matter was by no means settled. The practice got under way after Lulu had been lured back into her box by means of a fish.

The practice, though, was not as snappy as it should have been. The Seals seemed preoccupied with something other than water polo. It was a bad sign, considering the fact that they were to meet the rough, tough Sharks from the neighboring town of Sand City two days hence.

It would be a crucial game, a highly important contest in the three-game series. The citizens of the rival towns were highly water-polo-minded during the winter months. The game, with all its violent possibilities, held them fascinated. They were apt to go to extremes in building up their teams, and they had reached the tacit understanding that the amateur status of their players was not to be too closely questioned.

The Sharks had won the first game of the series. Not only that, but it was rumored that they had acquired another formidable player by the name of Keg Swartz. Keg would represent the Sharks for the first time when they invaded Seal territory for the second game.

Gap made an honest effort to swap Lulu for a horse, but the circus horses were all gone. Penny had the choice of a moth-eaten chimpanzee or a toothless lion. So with very bad grace, indeed, he resigned himself to Lulu.

He even permitted Lulu to be on hand for the game, clinging to the feeble hope that Lulu might conceivably act as some sort of inspiration to the team. Goodness knows, the Seals would need all the inspiration they could get.

So Lulu was placed on the edge of the pool as a one-animal menagerie. Her box had been remodeled to form a cage. The front was covered with

heavy wire and hinged at the bottom. It was fastened by means of a hasp at the top.

Gap had plenty to worry about, that game. Too many personal issues were at stake. He didn't kid himself at all as to what would happen if the Seals got licked to lose the series. It was more than likely that Lulu would be hailed as a jinx, and, inasmuch as Gap had introduced Lulu to the Seal fans, it was reasonable to expect that he would be left to hold the bag.

It would mean the end of Lulu, and it wouldn't help Gap's standing in the community a whole lot. It was more than likely that he would lose his job, but that didn't worry him much. There were plenty of other jobs. The point was that he had sponsored Lulu, and he didn't want the humiliation of having his hunch fail to pan out.

Nor was he any too encouraged by the fact that he was to be pitted against the new man, Keg Swartz. Keg was big as a house, and round, with that deceptive roundness which represents muscle rather than fat. Also, Keg had a mean look in his eye which belied the chubby innocence of his face. Yes, sir, it looked like a bad night for Gap Twilinger.

The game got under way in a fine smother of foam, but the visitors made the mistake of being a trifle too confident of success. They had a heavier, rougher team than the Seals, but the Seals had a slight edge in speed.

ON the first play, the Seals came away from the end of the tank like five racing motorboats, leaving Wally Hart, the goalkeeper, at his post.

Tink Jones, the long, lanky center of the Seals, reached the ball a shade ahead of the first Shark. Tink flipped the ball backward to Hap Dill, the left guard, while Gap, following the side of the tank, plowed up to his position at right for-

ward. From the corner of his eye Gap saw that Carp Meggs, the other forward, was reaching his own post.

Hap Dill got rid of the ball before he was tackled. Tink Jones took it on a short pass, and churned toward the Shark goal, bunting the ball along with his nose.

Gap tried to work clear of Keg, but Keg could move with surprising speed. He seemed to float like a cork, and his thick, stubby arms contained a tremendous paddling power.

The result was that Gap failed to get uncovered. Carp Meggs, on the other side of the tank, had better luck. He uncovered himself just inside the four-foot line, about ten feet to one side of the goal, and Tink whipped the ball through to him.

A Shark guard came at Carp, but Tink got there in time to tackle the guard within the four-foot area. Gap sprinted toward the goal with a burst that took Keg by surprise. Keg tried to tackle him, but his hand slid off.

The Shark center tackled Carp just as he skipped the ball across the surface into Gap's waiting hand. Gap made a lucky stab at it, and felt the fingers of his left hand sink into the ball. The goalkeeper lunged at him just a fraction of a second too late. Gap slapped the ball against the board for the first score. 3—0.

But Gap was a hero for the moment only. From that point on, Keg Swartz, his little eyes glittering like marbles beneath his tight, white hood, covered him like a tent. He was just as fast as Gap, and he had the strength of a grizzly bear. Gap's one hundred and sixty-eight pounds was no match for the two-hundred-and-twenty-pound bulk of Keg Swartz.

If Gap held any advantage at all, it lay in the fact that he could remain under water an amazing length of time. This gift, however, he was never able to put to its full test.

SPO—7A

Several times, Keg tackled him before he had a chance to get rid of the ball. On these occasions, the underwater fight was all too brief. Each time, Keg managed to get his hand on the ball, and once his powerful fingers had their grip, it seemed that no power less than a steel vise could have retained possession of the ball. Time after time he tore it from Gap's desperate grasp.

But if Gap wasn't the hero of the game, Tink Jones arose to the occasion by taking over those honors. His long, lanky form seemed to be everywhere in the pool at once as the first half sped along.

It didn't take the Seals long to find out that the Shark defense came pretty close to being air-tight. That meant that the Seals' percentage of touch goals was very small—so small, indeed, that they soon gave up the idea of scoring by this almost hopeless method. Keg Swartz was entirely too strong for them.

Tink solved this by resorting to thrown goals. His long, stringy arm acted as a catapult. He peppered the Shark goal from beyond the fifteen-foot line. Enough of these throws got through to keep the Seals from being swamped.

THEY started the second half with the score 15—12 against them. Almost immediately the Sharks got another touch goal to make it 18—12. Then Tink scored another bull's-eye to make it 18—14. Inspired by this, Carp Meggs heaved another one in to make it 18—16.

Shortly after that, Gap got his hands on the ball again. He looked wildly about, but found no one uncovered. He set himself to peg one at the goal, but before the ball could leave his hands Keg came surging across him like an ocean liner.

There was nothing for Gap to do but to hang on to the ball and accompany

Keg to the bottom of the tank. There was still plenty of fight left in Gap, even though he knew the cause to be virtually hopeless.

This time, he tried freezing to the ball with both hands; but Keg's fingers started their relentless work of prying the ball from its temporary anchorage.

The job was almost complete when Gap felt Keg's body give a convulsive jerk. A big bubble escaped from Keg's mouth, and he began floundering aimlessly like a man with cramps.

Gap couldn't imagine what it was all about, but when the reason did hit him, he also suffered considerable of a shock. He blew a bubble of his own, and when Gap blew a bubble from that mouth of his it was some bubble.

No one, however, could be expected to retain his composure in the face of the sleek, torpedolike form which came shooting out of the murky depths. It came like a sea monster, and a swimming tank was surely the last place in the world where a person would expect to encounter such an apparition.

After the first unpleasant jolt, Gap realized, of course, that Lulu had managed, in some manner, to escape from her cage, and that she had hopped into the pool for a little innocent fun.

Keg, however, had very clearly forgotten all about the Seals' mascot, and Lulu's playful entry into the picture probably convinced him that he was about to be torn limb from limb.

At any rate, he continued to blow bubbles, and Lulu grabbed the ball from his unresisting hands. Lulu promptly disappeared with her trophy, and Keg fought his way to the surface.

When he got there, he was in pretty bad shape. It seemed rather obvious that his nervous system wasn't constituted for shocks of this sort. His face resembled, in color, the belly of a fish, and his incoherent babblings suggested a person in the final stages of delirium tremens. Gap helped the others tow

him to the side of a pool like a stranded whale.

Lulu's unscheduled appearance in the Seal line-up caused considerable consternation, together with lots of amusement, among the spectators.

She had, it seemed, scored a clean touch goal, using excellent judgment in scoring it against the Sharks. Unhappily, however, the goal was not allowed, and Lulu was lured from the pool by means of another fish. Lulu would give up water polo any time for a nice fish.

The referee, having had no previous experience in matters of this sort, decided not to call a foul on the Seals. The Sharks squawked some over this decision, but the official was firm.

BUT it did not continue along its previous lines. There was a definite change, noticeable, for the most part, in the Sharks' morale. It suffered a definite breakdown, having its roots in the attitude of Keg Swartz.

He had to be virtually shoved back into the tank, and, once there, he showed no signs of recovering from his shock. Even though he was assured that Lulu had no further chance for escape, his game was nervous and quite without coordination.

The result was disastrous for the Sharks. By the time Keg had allowed Gap to score a couple of touch goals, the Sharks were thoroughly jittery. Their defense cracked up, and their offense did not improve. The Seals took full advantage of the situation, and when the final whistle blew they were leading 28—23. That made the score one—all in games, with the deciding contest to be played in the Shark tank.

Lulu's spectacular, though not entirely sporting, victory in the Shark game endeared her at once to the members of the team and to the fans as well. The only drawback was that it didn't seem to make her any more attractive to Penny.

Penny appeared unable to overlook the fact that Lulu represented an unwelcome investment of one hundred smackers. He wasn't entirely a tightwad, but he was a hard-headed business man who preferred to invest his money as he saw fit. It was only too clear that he didn't consider Lulu as an investment. He muttered dire threats of turning Lulu into a winter coat, but nothing came of it.

Penny's attitude toward Gap remained chilly and unfriendly. The matter wasn't discussed between them, but Gap knew without being told that the sword would remain suspended until after the final game with the Sharks.

Lulu's fate as a mascot hung by a threat, and Gap already regarded her as a pal to be saved. He knew how much this final game would mean to Penny, and he sensed that his boss must have a streak of superstition in him. Maybe Lulu was lucky, after all, so it was a reasonably safe bet that Penny would await the outcome of the game before taking drastic action.

In the meantime, Lulu lived a life of luxury. She made friends in a big, warmhearted way, and was always eager to learn new tricks. Among other things, she dearly loved the game of retrieving things from the bottom of the pool.

Just let an object of any size drop into the pool and Lulu was after it like a flash. If the thing were large enough for her to get into her mouth, she'd always bring it up and deliver it proudly into the hands of whoever had fish for dinner.

But the Seals didn't spend all their time at play. They didn't kid themselves about the toughness or the importance of the coming game with the Sharks. The whole town of Martinville was taking a deep and rabid interest in the outcome. And, shamelessly enough, they were pinning most of their faith on Lulu.

They had seen the positive manner in which Lulu had affected the Sharks' star, Keg Swartz, and they reasoned, logically enough, that Lulu was still capable of exercising that strange power over Keg.

Who knows, maybe she might just accidentally escape again. And even if she didn't, her mere presence at the side of the pool might go far toward accomplishing the same result. She would always be a threat.

NO, it wasn't an entirely sporting attitude, and Gap secretly disapproved of it. He didn't voice his disapproval, because he knew it would do no good, and would only make him appear ridiculous. Just the same, he didn't like it. He loved the game of water polo, and all this slick intrigue just didn't seem to fit in.

So he accepted the matter as philosophically as he could, and trained with everything he had for his second encounter with Keg Swartz. He hoped to show that he could handle the big hulk without any outside help.

The Seals, together with a few hundred of their ardent fans, made the short trip to Sand City by train, planning to arrive a couple of hours before game time. Lulu, in her cage, was lifted carefully into the baggage car, and left in the care of a baggage man.

Upon arriving in Sand City, Gap hurried immediately to the baggage car to see how Lulu had withstood the trip. Apparently she enjoyed traveling, for she was slumbering peacefully.

She continued to slumber while the cage was being lifted from the car, a fact which even Gap realized as unnatural. Lulu should be taking an interest in things by this time.

All of a sudden, Gap got downright worried. He yelled at Lulu. No response. He opened the cage and shook her. Lulu remained limply relaxed, snoring softly.

"Listen, mister," Gap demanded anxiously of the baggage man. "Has anyone been near this seal?"

"Nobody but one of your own fellows," said the baggage man. "He said it was her feedin' time. He gave 'er a couple of fish."

Awful suspicions leaped into Gap's mind. He knew that none of his own teammates had visited the baggage car.

"What did the guy look like?" he inquired tensely.

"Well," said the baggage man, "he was a big guy. Looked round and fat."

"Keg Swartz!" exploded Gap.

"Huh?" grunted the baggage man.

"Skip it," grunted Gap.

On closer examination, Gap found that Lulu's heart was beating with steady regularity. From this he deduced that Keg Swartz had merely slipped Lulu a heavy sleeping powder.

Gap was oddly relieved at this twist of events. Now the Seals would *have* to lick the Sharks under their own power. That suited Gap all right, but the other fellows on the team hit the roof.

"We've got to keep it dark," Gap warned them. "If we let our fans in on it, they're liable to start a riot. We'll just park Lulu by the pool and nobody'll know the difference."

The rest of the team agreed that this was a good idea, and game time found Lulu, still blissfully unconscious, sleeping in a place of honor beside the pool.

THE game got under way. From the opening whistle it was a bitter contest, with both teams shooting the works. It was virtually a matter of drown or be drowned, and in this department of the game the Sharks had a slight edge.

The Seals, however, were still steamed up over the treatment of Lulu, and their indignation supplied enough momentum to carry them through the first half.

Gap put up a grand battle against tremendous odds. He was still definitely outmatched by the power and size of Keg; but, just the same, Keg knew he'd been in a fight.

So did Gap, because Keg gave him the works. Keg was very obviously avenging his humiliation of the week before, taking it out on Gap in all the dirty ways he knew.

But Gap managed to demand all his attention, and that was something. He took a painful beating in the process, a beating which he felt was justified by the score at the end of the first half. The Sharks were only one small point ahead, 11—10.

There were six mighty-weary men in the Seal dressing room, but there was still plenty of fight left in them. Not a man among them would admit that the Sharks had left the tank in much better shape, and that the second half might prove a different story.

The five-minute rest, however, did the Seals a lot of good, and they stormed into the second half like an angry swarm of sharks. It seemed incredible that they could still hold their own against the bigger team, but they did it just the same.

They got a lot of breaks, to be sure, but they took advantage of them. Once more Tink Jones' throwing arm began to click. The Seals held their own, and, with three minutes left of the final half, Tink whipped in a thrown goal which put the Seals ahead for the first time, 19—18.

The fans went wild, and the two teams fell victims to the contagion of the frenzy. Weariness was forgotten as the play soared to new heights.

It was during a wild mix-up at the center of the pool that Tink lunged for the ball. His long legs gave a froglike thrust, and one foot smacked the Shark center flush on the snout.

The chances are it was an accident, but the referee chose to see it in another

light. His whistle shrilled. The game stopped, and the referee made his fateful decision. He suspended Tink temporarily from the game. That meant that the Seals would have to get along with five players until a touch or a thrown goal had been scored.

It was a stunning blow to the Seal hopes. Tink climbed from the tank, and sat, stiff with anger, upon Lulu's cage. The Seal fans were working themselves to the verge of a riot. Penny, his face red with fury, came bouncing out to the edge of the tank.

RIGHT then, things began to happen with bewildering speed. It was all started by Penny's uncontrollable excitement. He forgot to keep a grip on his teeth. They broke loose from their moorings, and the upper plate sailed into the pool with a farewell splash.

It was a funny accident which temporarily broke the tension. Penny stood for a stricken instant, then shouted something that sounded like "Whipf yog gee toosh!" meaning, probably, that he wanted someone to retrieve his teeth.

There were plenty of volunteers in the tank, and Gap was quick to see the threat of this. As members of the rival team headed for the bottom of the tank, Gap didn't have to use his imagination much to picture what would happen if one of the Sharks came up with the gleaming choppers.

Maybe they wouldn't steal them outright, but it was a pretty safe bet that Penny would have a sweet time getting them back. The Sharks didn't like him, anyway, and nothing would please them more than to play a trick like that on the old man.

Gap's eyes swung in desperation toward Lulu's cage, and fastened there in a rigid stare of hope. Lulu was coming out of her fog, throwing off the effects of the drug. Not only that, but she was making groggy efforts to get

out of her cage. She'd seen the teeth fall, and was heroically trying to accept her job of retrieving.

"Let 'er out!" roared Gap.

His voice reached Tink's ears above the bedlam. Tink was a fast thinker in his own right. He caught the idea in a flash, and a few seconds later, Lulu was in the pool.

With unerring instinct she sped to the bottom, heading toward the place where the teeth must be. There was a wild commotion below the surface. Almost immediately the scared faces of a half dozen Sharks appeared above the surface. One and all, they headed madly toward the bank.

Lulu took her time in coming up, but when she did, she was a sensation. Gasps of amazement and little feminine squeals of fright were heard, for Lulu's face was bisected with a wide and toothy grin of human teeth.

She hated to give up her new plaything, but was finally persuaded to do so. She was returned, sulking, to her cage. Then the angry Shark coach came over, and before anyone could stop him he had clamped a huge padlock in the hasp.

"I got myself this padlock just in case," he snarled. "Now let's see 'er get out of *that!*"

NATURALLY, Lulu didn't have a chance; but, after all, she had served a fine and noble purpose. She had rescued Penny's teeth from the hands of vandals, and for this Penny should be everlastingly grateful.

Gap realized all this, but he realized, too, that the whole thing would hinge on the outcome of the game. If the Seals could, by some miracle, hold their one-point lead, everything would be jake. If they couldn't hold it—well, Gap just didn't like to think about it. He knew Penny.

Two and a half minutes left to play. The Sharks were powerful now, with

the advantage of their extra man. They were desperate, too, as they were awarded the ball at their end of the tank. None of them, not even Keg, seemed worried about Lulu now.

Their attack started with a fierce rush. They came foaming up the pool. The crippled Seals surged out to meet them. The Sharks had to keep to the surface. They dared not waste time under water. They had to open up with passes.

But they weren't as accurate as they should have been, and Gap made an interception by a mighty effort. He was the last man on the Seal team who should have had that ball at the moment, because he was the one most certain to lose it. Gap had to admit that, even to himself.

Keg tackled him with battering force. Keg's huge arm came crashing across Gap's shoulder like a falling tree, forcing him beneath the surface where Keg could get in his dirty work without the embarrassment of having a foul called on him.

Gap had a weird thought at the moment. He wished that he had Lulu's underwater prowess. Keg would never get that ball from Lulu.

Then, rushing upon the heels of this, came the greatest inspiration Gap had ever had. It struck him suddenly that he was physically equipped to adopt *part* of Lulu's technique, at least.

From then on, Gap wasted no time in thought. With a quick thrust, he jammed a loose section of the soft ball into his big mouth. His teeth clamped down in a grip that would take a stick of dynamite to loosen.

But Gap was still taking no chances with those brutal fingers of Keg's. Before Keg had a chance to get a telling hold, Gap squirmed about with the speed of an eel, and by the time Keg's slow mind had a chance to grasp the crazy situation, Gap was in position.

He was head down. He fastened both hands with the grip of a drowning man

on Keg's right ankle. With his legs he contrived a scissors hold about Keg's body.

Keg couldn't break the grip, and he couldn't bend his bulky body enough to get his fingers within reach of the ball. With his neck outstretched, Gap kept the precious rubber just beyond Keg's groping fingers.

Keg tried all the rough stuff he could think of at the moment, but Gap kept his bulldog grip on the ball. Keg thrashed him around like bait on the end of a hook, but Gap clamped his teeth and took it.

SECONDS ticked away, and every second brought the game just that much closer to its end. Gap had a fine supply of wind. His deep chest was well filled and was standing the pressure nicely.

Keg was the first to break for the surface. Gap let him go, but took his time in following. On the way up, he transferred the ball to his hand.

Keg was waiting for him, but Gap's mouth was big enough to grab another supply of wind before Keg tackled him again. Once more they went down. Again Gap got the ball in his mouth, and managed his inverted hold on Keg's leg.

It was the same old story all over again. Gap stuck it out until Keg was forced to break for the surface. Gap followed him up, and the wild yelling of his teammates told him that the game was over.

Everybody, including Penny, wanted to shower Gap with the credit for the victory, but Gap would have nothing of it.

"Lulu did it," he insisted stubbornly. "If it hadn't been for Lulu, I'd never have been able to turn the trick."

Gap's admirers looked a bit vague at this, but they were willing to take his word for it, even Penny. So that made things all right.

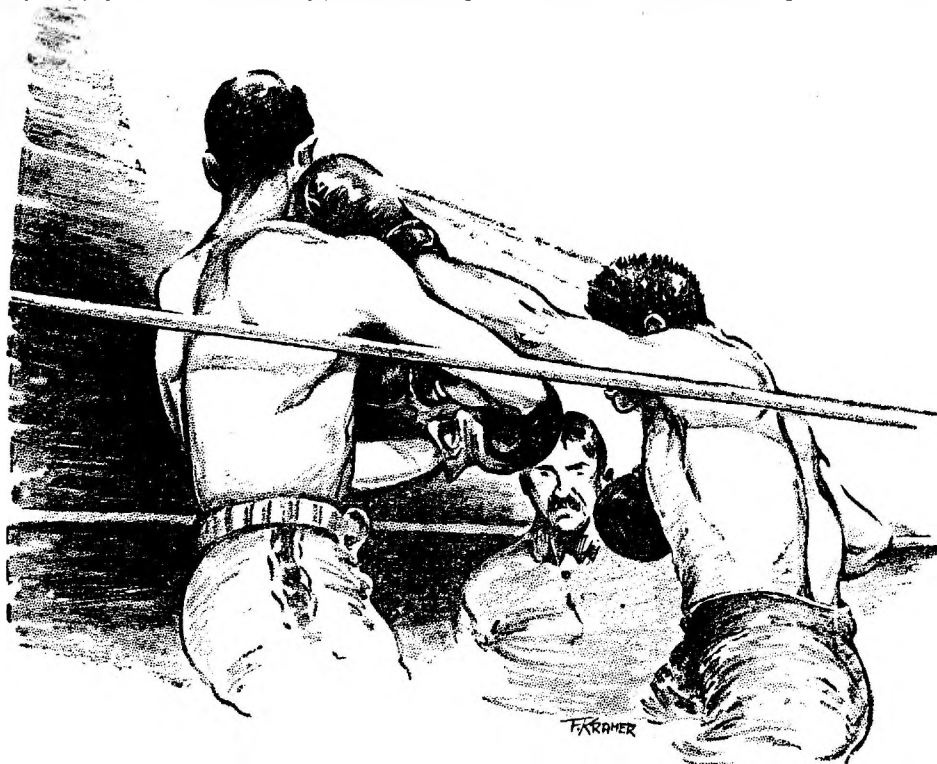
IRONCLAD

THE STORY OF SAILOR TOM SHARKEY

BY ARTHUR GRAHAME

AUTHOR OF:

"I WAS ALEXANDER THE GREAT," ETC.



PART II

TOM SHARKEY HAD NO DOUBT THAT HE COULD BEAT ANY MAN IN THE WORLD. AND YET, IT WAS HIS MISFORTUNE THAT HE NEVER BECAME THE CHAMPION OF THE WORLD—EVEN THOUGH HE HELD HIS OWN AGAINST CORBETT AND FITZSIMMONS AND JEFFRIES.

Ironclad

TOM SHARKEY and Jim Corbett met the day after their fight—the fight that made the ironclad Sailor world-famous overnight. Caustically, each congratulated the other on his ability as a wrestler. Then they got down to business.

Sharkey asked for a match for the championship. Corbett said that he was quite willing to give him one—as soon as his stage engagements allowed him time for training. A contract was prepared. One of its clauses was that until they met for the title, neither was to engage in anything more serious than exhibition bouts. Sharkey signed it. Corbett signed it, and a few days afterward departed on a long theatrical tour.

Tom had become tremendously popular in San Francisco. No one took the draw decision seriously, and although full allowance was made for Corbett not being in fighting condition, everyone was anxious to see the man who had bested the champion. Sailor Tom was showered with invitations to show himself at various sport gatherings, and Danny Lynch insisted that he accept some of them.

His first public appearance in the rôle of title contender was at a California Baseball League game. He wore a new suit of the lightest gray, a silver-hued alpine hat, bright-yellow shoes, and a tie of emerald green.

Blushing to his close-cropped scalp, he started to take off his hat when the umpire stopped the game to introduce him, thought better of the gesture, and instead ducked his head and waved his huge red hands at the crowd.

He looked so clumsy, so bashful and so entirely miserable that people had to stop cheering to laugh. Tom couldn't understand it. No one ever had laughed at him while he wore the blue of the navy!

Knowing nothing about baseball, and

having no idea what he was supposed to do next, he followed the umpire out onto the infield, and stood there grinning uncertainly.

"Play ball!" bawled the umpire.

A runner was slow in getting back to first base, and the pitcher tried to catch him with a sudden toss. Tom thought that the ball was coming his way, started to run, and succeeded in getting right in front of the throw.

The ball landed solidly on the back of his red neck, and the crowd again roared with laughter as it rebounded from that muscle-armored column and the runner dashed down to second while Sharkey sprinted desperately for the safety of the grandstand.

Kept out of the ring by his contract with Corbett, Tom soon found time hanging heavy on his hands. He lived very comfortably with good friends he had made in Vallejo, and did enough training to keep himself in condition, but often he caught himself regretting his old life in the navy, and yearning for the pitch and roll of an ironclad in a seaway.

EARLY in August, he heard that a monster benefit show for John L. Sullivan—who had fallen on very evil days—was to be held in New York's old Madison Square Garden on the last day of that month. He wired an offer of his services, and when it was accepted made the trip across the continent at his own expense.

Sullivan was fat and wheezy and a sorry figure for a man who only a few years ago had been champion of the world, but he still was a hero in Sharkey's eyes. Tom was delighted when he was selected to spar a three-round exhibition with the old gladiator.

He pulled his punches and did everything else that he could think of to make John L. look good. After the final gong, he received his reward—the thumping

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whack of Sullivan's heavy hand on his back and his huskily roared:

"It's champeen of the world you'll be bein' some day, me b'y, if you keep away from the drink that's been the ruination of the great John L. Sullivan!"

That was encouraging, and the New York sports writers found some nice things to say about the Sailor in their stories of the benefit, but Tom had left his beloved navy to work at the trade of fighting, and he wanted to work at it.

After he had gone back to Vallejo, the days again began to pass too slowly. But again and again Corbett met his demands that a date be set for their title fight with the excuse that he was tied up with theatrical engagements.

Then, with a grin on his freckled face and a swaggering swing to his wide shoulders, Bob Fitzsimmons came to town.

The lanky Australian-Cornishman was thirty-four years old, and he had been fighting for sixteen years, the last six of them in the United States.

A middleweight with the shoulders of a big heavyweight, he had challenged Corbett on the night that Gentleman Jim had won the championship from Sullivan, and since then, he hadn't allowed a month to pass without repeating his challenge. Supremely confident of his ability, and unable to get the champion into a ring with him, he was willing to fight anyone in shoe leather.

He was especially eager for the match when the National Athletic Club of San Francisco offered a winner-take-all purse of ten thousand dollars for a twenty-five-round bout between him and Sharkey.

Tom had bested Corbett, and Fitz figured that by knocking out the Sailor, he would make it impossible for the champion to continue his refusals to take up his challenge.

Danny Lynch made one more effort to get Sharkey a fight with Corbett, received the invariable answer, and signed

for the Fitzsimmons match. The date set was December 2, 1896, and the men had a month in which to prepare themselves for the battle.

BOTH men worked hard. Sharkey did his training at the old Cliff House, on the shore of San Francisco Bay. After a long day of road work, gymnastics and boxing, he would relax by swimming out to the famed Seal Rocks, a sensational achievement forty years ago, although girl swimmers do it now and think little of it.

Trouble developed over the selection of a referee. The terms were that if the fighters couldn't agree on the third man in the ring, he would be named by the club.

The fighters couldn't agree, so the club named Wyatt Earp, one of the well-known Earp brothers of Tombstone, Arizona.

As soon as this choice was announced, nasty rumors were heard in San Francisco sporting resorts—rumors that gamblers had paid Earp to give the decision to Sharkey.

Martin Julian, Fitz's manager, still was protesting violently against the club's selection when he accompanied Lanky Bob into the ring.

Wyatt Earp was there—a lean man with pale-gray eyes in a weather-darkened face, who drawled out his infrequent and brief remarks from under a drooping black mustache.

Martin Julian met the stare of those pale-gray eyes and modified the tone of his protests. He had, he took pains to make plain, no objection at all to Mr. Earp as a man and a citizen. He hadn't the slightest doubt of Mr. Earp's intention to be scrupulously fair. But refereeing an important fight was a task that demanded extensive ring experience, and Mr. Earp would be the first to agree that he—

Mr. Earp squinted his pale-gray eyes at a resin box in a far corner of the ring

and scored a bull's-eye with the product of his chaw of tobacco.

"I've been appointed referee," he drawled gently, "and I reckon that I'll referee. We'd better be gettin' goin'."

Julian felt a shiver run up his spine as he again met the cold stare of those pale-gray eyes. He shrugged his shoulders, and walked over to Fitz's corner.

Sharkey was staring across the ring at them, contempt plain on his pink-cheeked face. It was the first time that he had seen Fitzsimmons stripped for action, and Lanky Bob's spindly, knock-kneed legs and general gawkiness failed to impress him.

"I'll knock that fellow's head loose with my first punch!" he growled to Danny Needham, one of his seconds.

"Take care he don't knock your head loose!" Needham growled back at him. He had seen the awkward-looking Fitzsimmons fight!

THEY sparred carefully for a full minute after the gong's harsh clang had opened the first round. Then Sharkey saw an opening and ripped a hard left into Fitz's stomach. Grinning, Ruby Robert clinched; then, as they broke away, Tom wiped the grin off his face with a right-handed clout on the side of his hard head.

The Sailor rushed, with the crowd cheering him on. Laughing, Fitzsimmons side-stepped away. Then, unexpectedly, he stood his ground, and as Sharkey came in swinging, landed a right hook that permanently ruined Tom's left ear.

Sharkey went down so hard that he bounced, but he was up before Earp could start a count. He looked scornfully at Fitz.

"Is *that* all the harder you can hit?" he demanded, and rushed again.

And again Fitz's bone-crushing right hook stretched him on the canvas.

Again Sharkey got up without waiting for a count. Fitz was retreating be-

fore his charge when the bell ended the round.

After the rough going he had experienced in that opening session, the tide of battle for a while was in Tom's favor. Fitz outboxed him, but the Sailor's counter punching was deadly.

In the second round, he made the Cornishman's legs quiver with a left to the head; in the third, he doubled him over with a right to the stomach; in the fourth, there were yells of "Sharkey has him licked!" as again and again he made Fitzsimmons give ground before his furious body punching.

Then the tide turned again. One of Fitz's lefts badly damaged Tom's right eye. In the fifth, Lanky Bob staggered him with a barrage of punches; sent him sprawling under the ropes with a left to the jaw; kindly pulled him to his feet; and unkindly punished him through the remainder of the round.

It was all Fitzsimmons through the sixth and through most of the seventh; but late in the seventh, Tom started rushing again, and made Fitz back up.

The eighth opened with a clinch. After the break, Fitzsimmons landed a hard left on Sharkey's mouth. Tom answered with a rush, hitting overhand and hitting hard, and there was a stirring flurry of give and take.

Suddenly, Lanky Bob's deadly left hook thudded against the side of Tom's jaw. As the Sailor's knees buckled, Fitz crashed a man-killing right into his body.

Sharkey went down on his back, and lay writhing in agony.

Grinning, Fitzsimmons walked to his corner.

Wyatt Earp stepped to the center of the ring and raised his hand. "Foul," he drawled. "Sharkey wins on a foul."

Fitzsimmons, his face red with fury, rushed at him, but was stopped dead by something he saw in those pale-gray eyes.

Without another word, Earp left the

ring and walked up an aisle toward an exit. Men who had bet heavily on Fitzsimmons came at him shaking their fists and howling denunciations, then stopped suddenly and fell silent before the cold menace of his stare.

They wouldn't have stopped if they had known that, just before the fight had got under way, the dangerous Mr. Earp meekly had handed over his six-gun to a police captain who had asked him for it.

SOME fistic historians regard this fight as one of the classic crimes of the American ring. And yet, what evidence is available makes it seem certain that Wyatt Earp's decision was justified by the facts.

The sport writers had been seated in a gallery at one end of the big hall, and could not see the blow that had sent Sharkey down. Dr. Lee, a reputable physician, examined Tom after he had been carried from the ring, and said that he had been seriously injured by a blow far below the belt.

Sharkey says that the punch was an unintentional foul; that he was in bed from its effects for over a month, and that a year later, he showed Fitz lasting evidence of the injury, and that Lanky Bob then admitted that his punch had gone low, and expressed sincere regret.

It seems, looking back over a stretch of forty years, that what really happened was that crooked gamblers, in cahoots with the club management but not with either of the fighters, sent Earp into the ring to "throw" the decision to Sharkey, and that Fitz's unintentional foul saved Earp the necessity of being actively dishonest.

No matter how he may have felt about it a year later, Fitz at the time was furiously certain that he had been jobbed and robbed.

Martin Julian, his manager, took legal action to hold up the payment of the

purse, but a learned and dignified judge ruled that what happened in the prize ring was no business of his.

Finally, Danny Lynch collected the ten thousand dollars. He decided to invest it for his and Tom's mutual benefit. But he "invested" it on the wrong horse.

So all that the Sailor got out of one of his hardest fights was a cauliflower ear!

Tom Sharkey hadn't seen his mother and father for a full dozen years, and ever since he had left the navy, he had been planning a trip home.

But he wanted to go back to Dundalk a great man and a champion, and Jim Corbett, claiming justly enough that Tom had broken their agreement by fighting Fitz, still refused to give him a chance at the title.

Then, early in 1897, came the news that Corbett and Fitzsimmons had been matched for the championship.

Tom's fond hopes went glimmering. And then from New York he received an offer that seemed to provide a way out—an offer from William A. Brady of a fight with Peter Maher for the "Irish Championship."

Sharkey accepted without a moment's delay. He knew that to everyone in Dundalk the title of Irish champion would mean exactly the same thing as the title of world champion. So he'd beat down this Peter Maher from Galway, and go home a champion.

HE started East in March, and made his first stop in Carson City, a little Nevada mining town that scarcely broke the endless expanse of purple sage over which erratic Washoe zephyrs set the white dust devils dancing.

There he met old John L. Sullivan, and with him watched Bob Fitzsimmons become champion of the world by knocking out Corbett after taking a terrible beating for most of fourteen rounds.

Tom thought and said that he could beat either or both of them.

Then he went on to Salt Lake City, where he stayed long enough to earn a purse by winning an eight-round decision over Jim Williams, the man he had knocked out just before his fight with Corbett. And then on to New York.

Brady, who had quarreled with Corbett after being his manager for several years, was one of the world's master showmen. He owned the Palace Athletic Club, a fight club whose arena on a dingy Harlem street was a long, narrow hall that had been decorated crudely to give it the appearance of an ice cave, and into which eight thousand fans could be jammed.

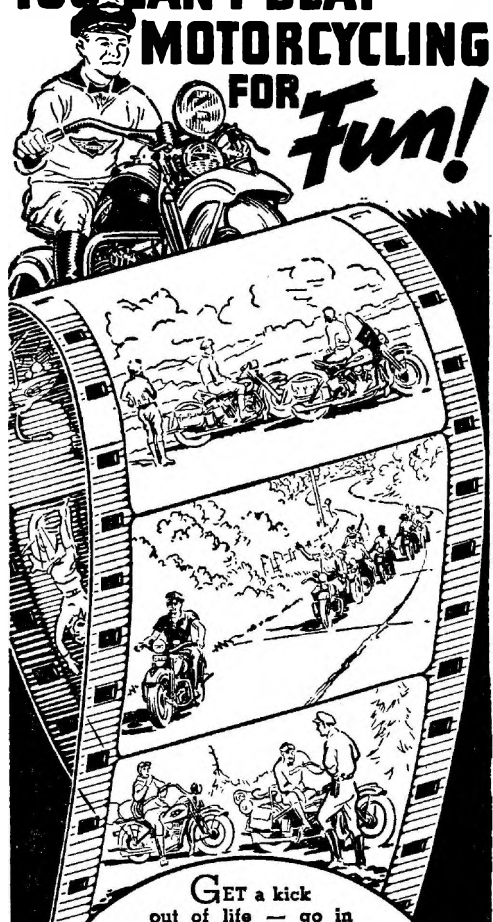
He scheduled the Sharkey-Maher fight for the evening of June 9th, and started a ballyhoo that was so successful that every reserved seat was sold weeks before that date, and a forty-thousand-dollar gate assured.

Tom engaged Joe Choynski as his trainer, and went into quarters at New Dorp, on Staten Island. He liked it there. He could watch the ships steam past, and hear the moan of their sirens when there was a fog hanging heavy over the harbor. Many sailors came to watch him train, and whenever Sharkey noticed one, he would welcome him warmly and urge him to stay a while for a yarn.

Tom worked hard, and was in excellent condition when he entered the ring. Maher, who was three inches taller than the Sailor, and outweighed him by fifteen pounds, looked a little soft and fat. But Peter was a veteran with a great reputation among the sons of Erin, and his big black mustache made him look both impressive and fierce, so his backers offered odds of five to four that he would win.

MAHER was painfully careful during the first round, and Sharkey had to do all the leading. His feinting had Maher badly worried, and Peter kept dabbing at his mustache with his gloved hands and coughing nervously.

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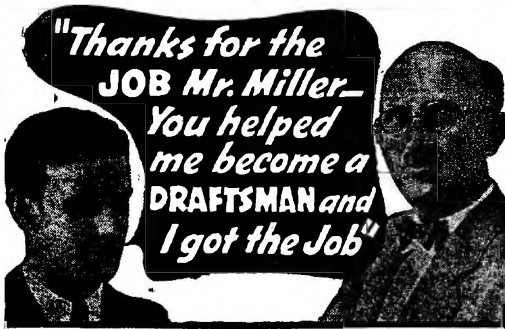


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In the second, Tom lashed out a right that landed on the Galway man's mouth, and for the remainder of the fight his mustache looked as if it had been pasted on crooked.

Toward the end of the sixth round, Sharkey, with a long lead in points, grew impatient. He rushed Maher, and sent him spinning dizzily across the ring with a roundhouse right that landed on his neck. When Peter stopped spinning, he went down on all fours. When he got up after taking a five count, Tom went for him again, but was stopped by the gong.

Oddly enough, that wallop seemed to do Maher much more good than harm. He came out for the seventh full of fight and bursting with conversation. For two minutes, he taunted Sharkey as he volleyed rights and lefts at him, and drove him around the ring.

Suddenly, Sailor Tom stopped his retreat. Grinning widely, he stood toe to toe with his heavier opponent and swapped punch for punch.

Soon, Peter had more than enough of that trading and clinched. Sharkey was laughing as they broke. Then Maher landed a short right hook to the jaw. The punch had dynamite in it, and Tom went down. But he was up again in a wink.

With Irish tempers flaring, the Queensberry rules went into the discard. Slugging, wrestling, roughing, the battlers didn't hear the gong. Fights were in progress all over the house, furious supporters of both men were climbing onto the ring platform, and a dangerous riot was more than a possibility. A police whistle shrilled, and bluecoats swarmed into the ring.

They arrested both fighters for disturbing the peace. They also arrested the referee. But as they were dragging him out of the ring, he broke away from them, tossed his arms high above his head, and yelled: "It's a draw!"

The judge before whom Sharkey and Maher were arraigned did not see that they had broken any law. So he dismissed the charges against them, and afterward shook their hands.

TOM started on his visit home. Many a time he had crossed the Western Ocean in a ship's fore-castle; now he crossed it again as a first-class passenger in a crack liner.

His mother and father traveled to Liverpool to meet him, and for a moment, neither of them recognized the frock-coated and silk-hatted man who rushed up to them with a happy grin on his face and with tears in his eyes.

So Tom went home to Dundalk as long ago he had daydreamed that some day he would come home—a rich and a famous man. The old town looked exactly as it had looked on that day twelve years before when, a barefooted runaway boy, he had gazed back over the stern of the old *Parkside* and watched the ruined tower of the ancient Franciscan priory fade into the rising mist of evening.

There were bonfires in Tom's honor, and picnics and other old-country jollities to entertain him, and to show his townsmen what a great fighter he had become he met a local boxer named Joe Parks in the ring, and knocked him cold in less than a round.

Tom enjoyed his visit, but after a couple of months, Dundalk began to seem dull and out of the world to the man who had known most of the great ports of the Seven Seas, and the bustle and excitement of sporting life in San Francisco and New York. And ambition was goading him. Bob Fitzsimmons was the heavyweight champion, and Tom was grimly determined to win and wear his crown.

So, early in the fall, he said good-by to his parents and to his numerous brothers and sisters and innumerable cousins, and started back to America. He broke his journey long enough to win three fights in Ireland and England—the longest of them lasted less than three rounds.

Early October found him back in Vallejo, California, and hurling sizzling challenges at Fitzsimmons.

But Ruby Robert was making money out of a theatrical tour, and was in no hurry to fight Sharkey or anyone else. So Tom signed to meet Joe Goddard, a good Australian heavyweight, at the National Sporting Club of San Francisco early in November.

Tom started fast, and in the first round floored Goddard with his favorite left hook to the jaw. The Australian was badly hurt, but his ringcraft enabled him to last out the round.

Toward the end of the next session, as they broke from a clinch, he landed on the back of Sharkey's neck with a rabbit punch that dazed the Sailor. But Tom weathered the storm, and won the fight with a clean knock-out punch in the sixth round.

San Francisco fight fans were anxious to see the Sailor in action again, and in early March of 1898, the management of Woodward's Pavilion obliged them by matching him for another fight with Joe Choynski, who still was a great local favorite.

Tom was much troubled in spirit as he trained for this bout. Our battleship *Maine* had been sunk in Havana harbor. Everyone knew that war with Spain was a matter of weeks or days.

Tom wanted to go to the war in an ironclad, but he also wanted to be the heavyweight champion of the world, and his friends told him that if he went back to the navy, he would be sure to lose his chance of winning the title.

THIS second battle between Sharkey and preacher-faced Choynski was one of the roughest that ever has been fought in a ring—an anything-goes brawl in which neither fighter paid much attention to the rules.

Tom had the better of it most of the way. During fierce fighting in the eighth round, he rushed his opponent to the ropes, and with a mighty wallop knocked him through them and off the platform.

The newspapermen on whom Joe fell pushed him back, but he was badly injured, and as Tom was helping him to his corner, the police entered the ring, and the referee called the fight a draw.

When a friend mentioned Jim Jeffries to Homer Davenport, that homespun humorist remarked: "Oh, yes, I know Jeff. He's the fellow who hoed up the Rocky Mountains!"

Everyone who saw Jeffries came away with that same impression of resistless primeval strength. He was like a grizzly bear—huge, shaggy, solid, awkward-looking and fast-moving. He had been fighting for two years, and had never been beaten.

When the managers of Mechanics Pavilion offered Sharkey a twenty-round bout with this dangerous rival, the Sailor wasted no time in doubtful hesitation.

"Sure and I'll foight him!" he said, and signed the contract with never a care because Jeffries had an advantage of five inches in height and of close to forty pounds in weight.

Tom Sharkey, in those days, had no doubt that he could beat any man in the world!

The fight was held on the evening of May 6th. It aroused intense interest, and Mechanics Pavilion was jammed by eight thousand fans.

The opening round was slow, with both men sparring cautiously. But in the second session there occurred an incident that the Sailor never was able to forget. Jeffries sent a hard right to his ribs, and Sharkey clinched. Jeff's big hands shot out and clutched Tom's thick arms. For all his mighty strength, the Sailor was helpless in his grip. Quite gently, big Jim shook him.

"Oh, you're not so strong, Tom," he said quietly, and let him go.

Sharkey's quick temper flared up. "I'll show you how strong I am!" he snarled, and landed his left on Jeff's ear so hard that the big fellow's legs quiv-

ered. But Jeffries only shook his shaggy head and came in for more.

The Sailor was worried as he went to his corner. For the first time in his life he had met a man stronger than Tom Sharkey.

FOR the next five rounds, Jeffries had the better of the battle, hurting Tom with hard lefts to the face and bone-crushing rights to the ribs. But in the eighth, Sharkey rushed his towering opponent, drove him to the ropes with lefts and rights to the jaw, and made him gasp with a pile-driving left to the stomach.

The next three rounds were full of savage fighting, with no advantage to either man. In the eleventh, Jeff sent the Sailor sprawling under the ropes with a right swing to his head, but Tom got up without taking a count, and, grinning cheerfully, hammered the big fellow so effectively that he evened the score.

Now there was even fiercer fighting. Neither bothered to guard; each took what his opponent sent him, and endeavored most earnestly to give more than he received. In a half dozen rounds of desperate milling, most of the spectators thought that Sharkey had a shade of advantage.

In the nineteenth, Jeff bombarded the Sailor with lefts to the jaw and rights to the body until he was arm-weary. Tom took it all with a grin on his badly battered face; then leaped joyously at Jeffries and battered away at him so viciously that he didn't hear the gong. His seconds had to drag him to his corner.

The final round was one breath-taking rally in the center of the ring. Neither fighter would take a backward step. The drumfire of wet leather against hard flesh could be heard even above the roar of the maddened crowd.

Clang! It was over! Alex Gregains, the referee, raised Jeffries' right

hand above his head. Some of the fans cheered; as many howled their dissatisfaction. Sharkey gave Greggains one withering look, then left the ring without a word.

Tom felt that he had been robbed of a well-earned victory. As soon as he awoke the next morning, he grabbed a newspaper to see what the boxing writers had to say about it. But it was a long time before he turned to the sports section.

There was stirring news on the front page—the news that Commodore George Dewey's squadron of ironclads, with gay flags that made the signal "Remember the Maine!" snapping from the yardarm of the flagship *Olympic*, had steamed into Manila Bay a few days previously and sunk a Spanish fleet in the first naval battle of the Spanish-American War!

It was with a sigh that Tom at last turned to the sports page. He still wanted to be champion of the world. But he also knew that he always was going to be sorry that Seaman Thomas J. Sharkey hadn't been with Dewey at Manila!

SHARKEY now placed himself under the management of Tom O'Rourke, who, a veteran of over a half century's connection with pugilism, suffered a heart attack in Max Schmeling's hotel suite the evening of the Schmeling-Louis fight, and died while his friend Max was in the ring achieving his astonishing victory over the Brown Bomber.

O'Rourke matched Sharkey with Gus Ruhlin, called the "Akron Giant," who was six inches taller but only ten or so pounds heavier than chunky Tom, and who had fought a twenty-round draw with Jeffries.

The fight took place at the Seaside Athletic Club in Coney Island on the evening of June 29th. Tom trained five weeks for it, and won it in less than

half a minute. At the beginning of the first round, he ran out to meet Ruhlin, feinted with his right, and hooked his left to the jaw. Poor Gus went down as if he had stopped a bullet, and was counted out twenty-seven seconds after the first gong.

Although Corbett had lost the championship, Tom still was anxious to get in a ring with him again and prove that he was the better man. All through the summer of 1898 he hurled challenges, and in the fall Gentleman Jim finally agreed to fight him.

They met at the Lenox Athletic Club on November 22nd, with every prominent sporting man in New York in the crowd. Honest John Kelly was the referee. Betting was heavy, with Corbett the favorite.

Glaring across the ring at Corbett, Sharkey felt all his old dislike and contempt for the "dancing master" who had taken the championship crown away from John L. Sullivan, his old hero.

"I'll knock him down in the first round!" he said to his manager.

"Don't be a fool!" snapped O'Rourke. "You'll be lucky if you manage to hit him in the first round!"

O'Rourke was right. Corbett, wisely saving his aging legs, fought a new sort of fight. He didn't move around much, but he had so perfected his guarding and ducking that Tom couldn't lay a glove on him.

Gentleman Jim was full of confidence when he stepped lightly out of his corner for the second. This was easy. He'd give this still-crude Sailor a boxing lesson that he'd remember! Ducking Tom's swings with consummate ease, he began to cut up his face with snappy jabs.

Sharkey kept on boring in. Toward the end of the round, he let fly a round-house right. Smiling contemptuously, Corbett ducked. But he misjudged his distance. Sharkey's hard-driven glove

thudded on his jaw. There was a wild yell from the crowd as he went down.

He struggled to his feet at the count of "nine." Then, as usual, he did the unexpected. Instead of trying to stay away from the slugging Sailor, he swapped punch for punch with him during the remainder of the round.

FOR three rounds, Gentleman Jim held his own with Sharkey at Tom's own game. Then the pace began to tell on him, and Sharkey sent home several damaging punches.

In the seventh, he cornered Corbett in an angle of the ropes, and crashed through his guard with a left that almost ended the fight.

Corbett was weak when he came out for the eighth. Sharkey tore into him. Corbett clinched and held on desperately. Tom wrenched himself free and rushed again. His legs quivering, Gentleman Jim clinched again.

Connie McVey, one of his seconds and his devoted friend, couldn't bear seeing him knocked out. He leaped into the ring, pushed between the fighters, and began to protest to the referee that Sharkey was roughing in the clinches.

Honest John Kelly could not overlook this infraction of the rules. He motioned the men to their corners and shouted: "Sharkey wins on a foul!" And then: "All bets are off!"

Kelly obviously thought that there was something queer about the fight. Many of the spectators agreed with him. Why, they demanded, had Corbett, the favorite in the betting, changed his style of fighting and slugged with the more powerful Sharkey?

W. W. Naughton, one of the leading boxing experts of the day, wrote that the fight "had been rehearsed blow for blow."

Years afterward, Corbett explained the drastic change in his fighting tactics. His ankle, he said, had been severely sprained when Sharkey knocked him

down in the second round, and as he wasn't able to move around and keep away from the Sailor, he had to meet him at his own game of slugging.

This fight always will be clouded by suspicion, but there is no evidence that it was crooked.

NORMAN SELBY had learned to box when he was a thin and scrawny cash boy in a Louisville dry-goods store. He had learned for a definite reason; he wanted to get even with the other store boys, who were always bullying him.

Even in those early days, he had been an experimenter and an innovator. He had discovered that if he shot his left fist out straight until it was three or four inches from its target, and then twisted his wrist sharply to his right, his blow would land with explosive force several inches below where its victim had thought it was aimed.

That punch enabled him to even up a lot of old scores. It was the "corkscrew punch" that was to make him famous.

Selby had adopted the fighting name of "Kid McCoy" when he entered the professional ring. He was an inch short of six feet, and weighed only a hundred and sixty pounds.

Pasty-faced and shallow-chested, he was no picture-book athlete. His black eyes were cold and hard as pieces of jet, and when he smiled—which usually was when he had hurt the other fellow—his thin, bloodless lips stayed close together except at the corners of his mouth, where they curled up and showed white teeth that were like the fangs of a wolf.

Failing in his efforts to get Sharkey a fight with Bob Fitzsimmons for the championship, Tom O'Rourke matched him with McCoy, who had proved that he was big enough to fight anyone by winning a twenty-round decision over Gus Ruhlin.

They met at the Lenox Athletic Club on January 10, 1899, with Tim Hurst, who was small, honest and fearless, as referee.

Bandages were adjusted in the dressing rooms. When the fighters met in mid-ring to receive Hurst's instructions, Tom extended his hand.

McCoy's thin lips twisted in his wolf grin. "No, you so-and-so Irish this-and-that," he snarled, "I won't shake hands with you!"

Quick-witted O'Rourke grabbed one of his hands. The bandage on it still was damp. It had been soaked in plaster of Paris that soon would be as hard as cement!

After McCoy's hands had been newly bandaged, the gong clanged. Sharkey, furious at the trick his opponent had attempted, waded right in. But O'Rourke had engaged clever Tommy Ryan to improve Tom's boxing, and now the Sailor heard Ryan's voice from his corner, "Box him!"

THAT was just what Kid McCoy wanted. His black eyes cold as ever, he watched for his chance. It came in the third round. He fainted Tom into a tangle, and then corkscrewed his left into the Sailor's jaw.

Tom's body flew through the air, and when he came down he hit the canvas with the back of his head.

"One! Two! Three!"

Sharkey rolled over on his right side.

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"Four! Five!"
 He was trying desperately to get up. "Six!" He scrambled to his feet, with his left arm hanging limp from the paralyzing shock of McCoy's corkscrew punch.

Tom staggered like a drunken man, but he staggered toward his foe. Then he stuck out his tongue and said, "Ma-a-ah!"

It wasn't funny. There was so much deadly menace in his grimace and in the uncouth sound that McCoy backed away and sparred cautiously until the bell ended the round.

Sharkey recovered quickly, and came out for the fourth in good shape. There had been heated argument between O'Rourke and Tommy Ryan, and O'Rourke had ordered Tommy out of the corner.

Then O'Rourke shouted to the Sailor: "Don't spar! Go below!"

Tom obeyed orders. He swung a right that landed a little above McCoy's belt, and the Kid was hurled through the air as if a bull had tossed him. He came down with a crash, but managed to get up on the count of nine. Then he backed away, claiming a foul that Tim Hurst disallowed with a grim shake of his head.

After that, McCoy didn't have a chance. In the tenth round, Tom sent his left to the Kid's body, and then to his jaw. McCoy went down—and he didn't get up.

On June 9th, Bob Fitzsimmons defended his championship for the first time, and lost it to Jim Jeffries.

One early-fall day, Sharkey asked his manager why he was smiling so cheerfully.

"Better get down to your training, Tom," replied O'Rourke. "Jeff has agreed to give you a shot at the big title!"

The third and last part of this article will be published in the 2nd March issue of Sport Story Magazine, on sale February 17th. Sharkey's grueling fight for the world championship with Jeffries at Coney Island, New York, is the highlight in Part III.



BIG MOMENTS IN SPORT

by HANDLEY CROSS

EAST VS. WEST IN BASKETBALL

*Stanford Indians Tame C. C. N. Y.
Beavers*

THE Madison Square Garden in New York on the evening of December 27, 1937. Eighteen thousand basketball enthusiasts filling every seat and standing in the aisles to watch a sensational inter-sectional double header—Minnesota against Long Island University, and Stanford against the College of the City of New York.

The Golden Gophers have routed the Long Island Blackbirds, 56—41, in the first game. Now the court is crowded by players who are warming up for the second struggle. Stanford's mighty Indians, whose average altitude is six feet four inches, tower over the lavender-shirted New Yorkers, whose only six-footer is big Bernie Fliegel.

Now the court is cleared except for the ten starting players and the officials. Fliegel and big, straw-haired Art Stoefer face each other in the center circle. The referee tosses up the ball between them. Stoefer outleaps his opponent, and taps the leather sphere to a fellow Indian. They're off!

The first minute of the game gives the fans assurance that it isn't going to be any pushover for the cardinal-shirted young giants from California. They have speed and high skill as well as superior height, and their one-handed shots are breath-taking.

But the Holman-coached City College boys also are fast and skilled, and their nifty ball handling and deceptive short-passing game seem to have the Indians puzzled. So, after a couple of minutes of fast play, C. C. N. Y. has a 4—3 lead, and the New York cohorts are yelling their joy.

But they are joyful too soon. The Stanford offense starts clicking. With Hank Luisetti setting up plays and feeding the ball to his teammates, Art Stoefer making spectacular one-hand push shots, and Phil Zonne doing plenty of expert sharpshooting of his own, the Indians rush ahead.

With five minutes of the first half left to play, they are leading at 19—9. It looks bad for C. C. N. Y., but the New York boys keep right on fighting.

Unable to overcome the heavy handicap of Stanford's greatly superior height under the basket, they keep hustling

after the ball every second that time is in, and their set shots from long range begin to drop through the cords.

Stanford is able to score only a single free throw while City College is ringing up five points, so when the half ends the Californians' lead has been cut to six points, and the score is 20—14.

SECOND half. The Indians start it with another of their breathtaking scoring rushes. After eight minutes of play, they are leading at 31—20, and seem dead sure to win.

But now the whistle shrills. Personal foul on Art Stoefen. It's his fourth, so it sends him out of the game. Bob Zonne, one of his legs wrapped in a Charley-horse bandage, and so lame that he scarcely can walk, takes his place.

The Stanford players seem staggered by the loss of big Stoefen, who has scored seventeen of their points. They waver badly, and for a moment it looks as if both their attack and their defense is going to fall apart.

But now Luisetti, their black-haired captain, proves his greatness. So far, although he has been the key man of the Stanford offense, he personally has scored only four points. Now he really cuts loose.

Dribbling artfully, passing accurately and always to the man who will be able to do the most good with the ball, shooting from close in or far out on the floor, he leads his team on another scoring splurge, and in four minutes himself shoots five baskets!

Eight minutes left to play, and Stanford leading at 42—26. No wonder the New York rooters have lapsed into comparative quiet. No chance now.

No chance, hey? The lavender-shirted players out there on the floor don't feel that way about it. The crowd may think that they are beaten, but that doesn't matter so long as *they* don't think so.

They start cutting into that staggering sixteen-point lead. Red Paris is everywhere at once; and when he gets a chance to shoot, he makes good on it. So does Lefkowitz. And little Izzy Katz, sharpshooting from far out on the floor, loops the ball over the tall Stanford players' heads into the basket.

The crowd goes crazy as City College scores ten points in a row.

Now it's Stanford 42, C. C. N. Y. 36.

With less than two minutes to play, the score is Stanford 44, C. C. N. Y. 42.

Once more Captain Hank Luisetti proves his basketball greatness. The calmest man in the Garden, he gets his badly shaken team together, and leads it in another great effort. The Indians get the ball, and in spite of all the City College players' frantic efforts, the Indians hold the ball while the seconds tick slowly away.

A whistle shrills. Technical foul on City College. Bob Zonne limps slowly to the foul line. He shoots, and the ball arches through the cords. Hank Luisetti smiles broadly.

A pistol barks. The game is over. Stanford 45, C. C. N. Y. 42.



A HOCKEY THRILLER



Toronto vs. Boston

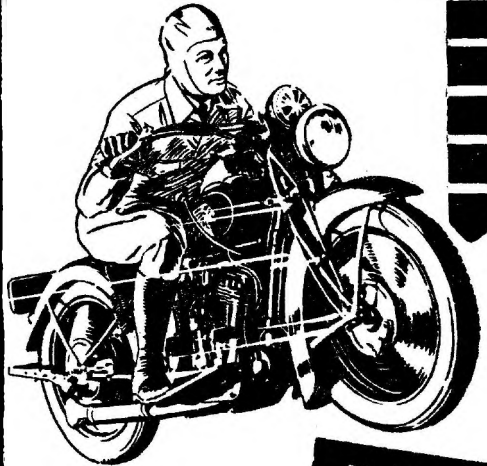
THE Boston Garden on the evening of March 29, 1938. Sixteen thousand Boston hockey fans cheering their Bruins when they aren't too busy booing the Toronto Maple Leafs, whose roughness has got them in bad, even in a city which likes its ice sport rough and tough.

This is the third game of the National Hockey League first-place play-off series. The Leafs have won the two games. If they can win this one, it will give them the league championship and the right to continue in the scramble for the Stanley Cup. But no Boston player nor Boston fan thinks for a moment that the Leafs are going to win this game.

They're off! The battle isn't a half-minute old when Charley Sands, one of the Boston forwards, tangles with Red Horner, of the Toronto defense forces. They both are chased to the penalty box. The game gets even rougher. Bob Davidson carries the rubber down onto Boston ice, and Eddie Shore body-checks him into the side boards. Fists fly, and both of them are sent off. Twenty seconds after they get back they go to it once more—and are chased again.

Suddenly, a swift-skating Boston attack crashes the Toronto defense and swirls in on Turk Broda. The crowd yells its delight as the Bruins shoot, and shoot again and yet again; but each

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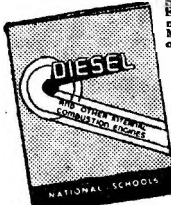
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time they shoot the Leafs' goalie makes a brilliant save.

With the period half gone the **Bruins** are forcing the pace. But their repeated attacks are shattered by the iron-bound Toronto defense. Two minutes to play. Dutchy Schmidt, a Boston spare, goes down alone. Jimmy Fowler and Red Horner stretch him out when he attempts to skate between them.

But Schmidt keeps on fighting. Sprawled on the ice, he shoots for an open corner of the cage. He has the surprised goalie beaten; but the disk misses its mark by inches. The gong clangs. No scoring, but plenty of action!

Second period. After a minute of fast play, Syl Apps, the Toronto center, steals the puck out of a fierce mix-up in front of his own goal. As he bobs and feints up the ice, Gordon Drillon skates swiftly on his left flank.

They flash over the Boston blue line, and Apps flicks the rubber over to Drillon. Gordie, his blades shrieking on the ice, rides in on Jack Portland. Now he reverses with a sudden swerve that puts the puck on his forehand, and lets fly. Thompson, the Bruins' star goalie, makes a wrenching effort to save, but the red light flashes behind the Boston cage.

Toronto 1, Boston 0.

No more rough stuff; neither team now can afford the hazard of being a man short. The Bruins keep on jamming the puck into Toronto territory with desperate five-man attacks, but the Leafs beat off every attempt on their goal.

NOW third period. Three minutes after the opening face-off. Ray Getliffe, one of the Boston wing men, starts up the ice with the puck. He loses it for a moment, gets it on his stick again, and passes it to Charlie Sands.

Two Leafs are between Charlie and Bill Cowley, who is uncovered right in front of the Toronto goal. Charlie takes a chance and slaps the puck between

them. Cowley stops it with a skate blade, spins around, and blazes the rubber past Turk Broda.

Toronto 1, Boston 1.

Now the game becomes even faster and even more desperate. Three Toronto players break loose and flash down the ice and around the Boston defense. George Parsons shoots. His hard drive hits a goal post, but it pulls Tiny Thompson off balance. Pep Kelly swoops in, takes the rebound, and pokes the disk into a corner of the netting before the Boston goalie can recover.

Toronto 2, Boston 1.

Boston fights back fiercely. Eddie Shore leads rush after determined rush down the ice, and the Bruins bombard Turk Broda with stinging shots. But Broda stops them all.

Three minutes to play. There's a face-off near the Toronto goal, and Shore gets the puck. He sends a high pass to Bill Cowley, waiting just outside the Toronto crease. Cowley takes a slap shot at the rubber while it is in the air, and connects cleanly. Even Turk Broda hasn't a chance of saving that one!

Toronto 2, Boston 2.

Overtime—sudden death. The fans are frenzied.

Now the Bruins are playing careful hockey, keeping both their defense men back of their blue line, and waiting for a break.

A Toronto attack storms down the ice, with Gordon Drillon carrying the puck. He gets around the defense, and plunges in on the goal. He has only Thompson to beat, and the crowd shrieks its fear. But he misses.

Ten minutes gone. Bingo Kaupman, the Leafs' rookie defense man, dashes up the center of the rink with the puck on his stick. When he tries to get around the Boston defense Portland and Shore crash into him. Bingo goes down, and there's a free-for-all mix-up.

Syl Apps hooks the puck out from under the skates of the milling players, on the side away from the Boston goal. Drillon pounces on the rubber and shoots it with all his power right through the struggling mob.

Goalie Thompson has no chance of stopping a shot that he can't see, and the red light flashes behind the Bruins' goal.

Toronto 3, Boston 2!

IN THE NEXT ISSUE



**Thousand And One
MANAGERS**

(hockey novelette)

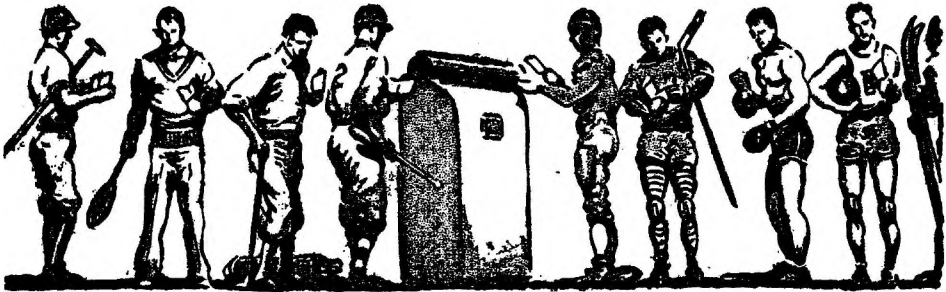
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START GETTING READY!

TAKE a look at the calendar. February! It won't be so long now! Of course, in most parts of the country baseball diamonds, running tracks, tennis courts and golf courses still are covered with snow.

But snow doesn't last long when the warm spring sun gets to work on it. And then spring will be here again. But will you be ready for it?

Are you going to start this year's season of your favorite warm-weather sport in good physical condition—wind good, legs ready for the hard work you are going to give them, muscles loosened out of their winter's rust?

Or are you going to start off away out of condition—your breath coming in short pants after you've run half a lap, your legs shaky after you've sprinted from the plate down to first a couple of times, your muscles so stiff that you can

hear them creak when you take a swing at a tennis or golf ball?

It's up to you, of course. But if you are going to open the approaching season in good physical shape, February is the month to start getting there.

There's no dead easy road to good physical condition. You have to work for it. Start your training easily, but start it *now*. Get back into the training habit of eating three good meals a day, with maybe an additional snack before going to bed, and not eating between meals. If you are going to eat any candy, eat it just after meals; it's good for you then.

Go to bed in time to get a solid eight hours of sleep before you have to get up. If possible, make it nine hours.

Smoking? Well, that depends. If you are a runner, you had better stop it altogether. But baseball players and

many other athletes seem to be able to smoke moderately without it doing them any harm. If you continue smoking, make certain that your smoking is moderate.

Now about exercise.

No one ever has devised an all-around conditioner better than taking long walks. When you walk briskly, you exercise your legs, your abdominal muscles, your chest, and even your arms. If you will average twenty miles a week for the coming month or six weeks, you'll be in good-enough general condition to start hard training for any sport on the long list.

You can sharpen up your wind by taking a couple of short sprints every day. A half hour of gym work, or handball, or bag punching two or three times a week do a lot toward getting the muscles of your upper body and arms working properly.

Getting into decent condition isn't a hard or even an unpleasant job. In fact, it's fun. But it is a job that you should start working on right away!

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Please give me the official world records, and their holders, for the following track and field events: 100 yards, 880 yards, one mile, 120-yard hurdles, and pole vault. N. P., North Carolina

The record for 100 yards, 9 4-10 seconds, is held jointly by Frank Wykoff and Jesse Owens, both of the United States. The record for 880 yards is 1:49 6-10; it is held by Elroy Robinson,

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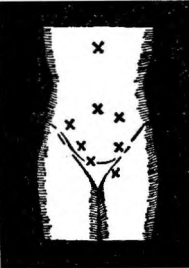


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of the United States. The record for one mile, 4:06 4-10, is held by Sydney Wooderson, of Great Britain. Bob Osgood, of the United States, holds the world record for the 120-yard hurdles, which is 14 seconds flat. The record for the pole vault is 14 feet 11 inches. It is held jointly by two Americans, Earle Meadows and Bill Sefton.

I am a 16-year-old girl, height 5 feet 7 inches, weight 129 pounds, and am very much interested in competitive roller skating. Will you please tell me how I can strengthen my legs and arms for racing? Also how I can improve my wind.
 L. K., Minnesota

You could strengthen your legs and arms by doing all-around gym work for a half hour or so, three or four days a week. If you haven't the use of a gymnasium, walk an average of at least twenty miles a week, and take a couple of thirty-five-yard sprints every day. This will strengthen your legs and improve your wind.

You can strengthen your arms by using an elastic home exerciser for fifteen minutes every day, or by doing anything that calls for the use of the arms—throwing and catching a basketball, or doing sweeping, for example. Easy skating at ordinary speed, while paying attention to good balance and correct form, is the best of all training for speed skating.

I am 18 years old, 5 feet 8 inches tall, and weigh 138 pounds. In baseball I'm a good hitter, base runner and left fielder, but I'm not good at throwing. Next season, I would like to play center field instead of left field. Do you think that I should? How can I improve my throwing from the outfield to second base?
 H. A. S., New Mexico

Try playing center field if you think that you will like it better than left field; but you'll have just about as many long throws to make. You can improve your throwing by developing your arm and by practicing. During the winter, pull chest weights, punch the bag, or chop wood. As soon as it gets warm

enough, start practicing throwing every day.

Don't do too much throwing on any one day, and always stop when your arm begins to feel tired or the least bit sore.

My friend claims that the weight limit of the welterweight boxing class is 147 pounds. I claim that it is 145 pounds. Who is right? B. B. G., Massachusetts

Your friend is right.

I ride a bicycle an average of nine miles a day. Will that help to increase my speed in running short distances?

A. T., Maryland

Riding a bicycle strengthens the legs, but it doesn't help directly in increasing running speed. You should train for sprinting.

Please tell me how I should breathe while swimming the crawl stroke in competition. After I swim fifty or sixty yards I get out of wind and have to quit. Several people have told me that my trouble is that I keep my head in the water too much. B. B., New York

Probably your difficulty results from you not having properly synchronized your breathing with your stroke. You should take one breath for each complete revolution of your arms. Your face should be in the water at the start; then your head should turn until your mouth is out of the water; then you should gasp in a big breath through your mouth; then your head should turn until your face again is submerged, and you should exhale the air steadily through your nose.

Please give me the names of the fighters who have held the world's heavy-weight championship since Gene Tunney retired. K. H., Michigan

Max Schmeling, Jack Sharkey, Primo Carnera, Max Baer, Jim Braddock, and Joe Louis.

I am 18 years old, 5 feet 7 inches tall, and weigh 153 pounds. I am taking up running seriously. At our last Y. M. C. A. track night I ran 50 yards in 8 seconds and 100 yards in 15 seconds. I have done 1:58 in the 660 yards. All of these times were made on a very small track. For which event do you think that I am best suited? J. V., Ontario

With your build, I think that you would do better in sprinting than in middle-distance running.

What is the world record for the running broad jump, and who holds it? N. P., Massachusetts.

The world record for the broad jump is 26 feet 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ inches. Jesse Owens established it in 1935.

Is indoor training any good for a shot putter? If so, what sort of training should he do? H. W. L., Delaware.

Any form of exercise that develops the muscles of the arms, shoulders and back is good winter training for the shot putter. Pulling chest weights and work on a rowing machine are excellent. Good off-season sports for the competitor in this event are boxing, wrestling and hand ball. Work with the indoor shot, three days a week, should be done if it is practicable.

Please give me the name of the winner of the 1936 Olympic Games 10,000-meter race, and his time and what country he represented. Also, I would like to have a four-days-a-week training schedule for 10,000 meters. H. M., Indiana

Ilmari Salminen, of Finland, won the 1936 Olympic 10,000-meter race. His time was 30:15. I would suggest the following four-days-a-week training schedule for you: First day: Four miles at an easy pace. Second day: Two miles, fast. Third day: Three miles, fair pace. Fourth day: Ten thousand meters—6 miles 376 yards—at an easy pace. About two weeks before your race, run 10,000 meters at close to your best speed.



THE LOCKER ROOM

FEELS kinda good down here in the Locker Room, among steam pipes, these days. It takes a little more than the steam various readers want to blow off to keep everybody comfortable, with the mercury sitting way down low in the tube outside.

The opinions of readers are always of interest to the editor. They help him to correct his mistakes and make a better Sport Story Magazine.

The lead-off man this time renews an old controversy with a strong yes vote for the much-kicked-around Baldwin the Bouncer.

Dear Editor: For the past few months, there have been no Baldwin stories. I think they were one of the best stories you had. How about more of them?
Jack McNevin.

South Pasadena, California.

The writer of the next letter has a hobby of compiling oddities in All-American football teams. He sends in twelve of his "All" selections—too many to publish here in the

Locker Room. So two will have to serve as a sample.

Dear Editor: Inclosed are a few All America "names" teams, that may interest you. Players are in their regular positions, unless otherwise noted.

All Pigskin

e. Held	Macalester
e. Wall	Chattanooga U.
t. Gaines	Denver U.
t. Pass	Texas A. & I.
g. Quick	Catawba
g. Player	Utah State
c. Huddle	Lenoir Rhyne
b. Fast	Wichita U.
b. Ball	Santa Clara
b. Block	Elmhurst
b. Kick	Bucknell

A Baseball Eleven

e. Pat Malone	Southwestern (Kan.)
e. Matthewson	California
t. Ott	Drexel
t. Dickey	Virginia U.
g. Grimm	W. and J.
g. McCarthy	Williams (c)
c. Frick	Penna. U.
b. Cobb	Baker U.
b. Babe Ruth	Syracuse
b. Foxx	Tenn. U.
b. Eddie Collins	Yale U.

Very truly yours,

E. Nace.

Altoona, Pa.

Sorry we can't print the rest of Mr. Nace's selections, which include the All Z-skis—names beginning with Z and ending with -ski; the All-Famous People; the All Unpronounceables, which include Hrycyszyn, of St. Bonaventure's, and Cswaykus, of Canisius; the All Coaches' Names eleven, et cetera.

A very creditable poem is sent in by a young reader, who bids fair, in time, to be a competitor of Arthur Rafter.

Dear Editor: I am thirteen years of age and have been reading your magazine for two years. I enjoy it very much. I have recently written a poem, which I am inclosing:

THE PLIGHT OF A LINEMAN

Up in the stand, they don't give a hand
To the underrated lineman;
They don't give a care whether or not
he's there—

The underrated lineman.

In the thick of the fight, he's out of their
sight—

The underrated lineman.

The scouts they gaze, and the newspapers
praise—

Not the underrated lineman.

He opens holes that lead to goals—

The poor, unnoticed lineman.

He holds 'em in front, when they get off
a punt—

The poor, unnoticed lineman.

But it's a diff'rent story when they hand
out the glory—

And forget the unnoticed lineman.

Yours truly,

Larry Siegel.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

A reader from Down Under finds
the baseball stories entertaining,
even though the game is unfamiliar
to him.

Dear Editor: As a reader of Sport
Story each month, I can honestly say that
I enjoy each story in the magazine. I
like reading the baseball stories, although
I do not know much about the ball game.

I am a racing cyclist myself, and I en-
joy reading stories of track and field and
boxing in particular.

An Overseas Reader,

Arnie Keith.

Auckland, New Zealand.

A boost for a new writer, from a
Canadian reader. Wonder how the
temperature is up there in Ver-
dun, P. Q.

Dear Editor: I have been reading your
Sport Story Magazine for eight years
now, and this is the first time I have
written to the Locker Room. Your au-
thors and stories are just swell.

My reason for writing is to tell you
how good Edward L. Leamon is in
"Brains Ain't Everything." To my
knowledge, I don't think he has been in
Sport Story before. His humor adds
something different to the story.

Another thing I would like to add is
that I have learned more about other
sports in your magazine than I ever
knew before. Naturally, being a
Canadian, my favorite sport is hockey.

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But that doesn't mean that all other sports aren't tops. *W. J. Breeze.*
Verdun, Quebec.

When a fella who doesn't like to write letters takes his pen in hand to tell an editor what he thinks of his mag, it's a sign that he likes the mag a lot—or else that he's pretty mad about something. But this reader doesn't seem mad.

Dear Editor: I don't like to write letters, but I think your magazine is swell. Robert N. Bryan sure can write good baseball stories. Tell Jackson V. Scholz to write more golf stories. Franklin P. Miller's "No Team Sentiment" was very good. *Dick McGrayle*
Toledo, Ohio.

A good word for the "Skull Practice" feature. Evidently this reader likes to exercise his gray matter.

Dear Editor: I especially like the baseball, football and hockey stories in your magazine. The "Skull Practice" is another good feature. My favorite writers are Bob Bryan, T. W. Ford, and Arthur Mann. Keep up the good work. *Alan Goodfield*

New York, N. Y.

Thanks, one and all, for your letters! Drop in to the Locker Room again!

All letters should be addressed to the Locker Room, Street & Smith's Sport Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

(Solution to puzzle on pages 92 and 93)

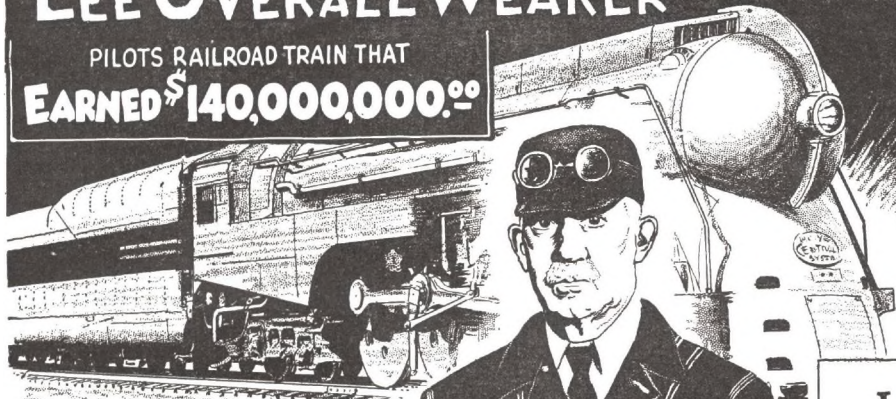
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163	P	164	L	165	Y	166	167	168	169	170	171	172	173	174	175	176	177	178	179	180	181	182

Believe It or Not! *by Ripley*

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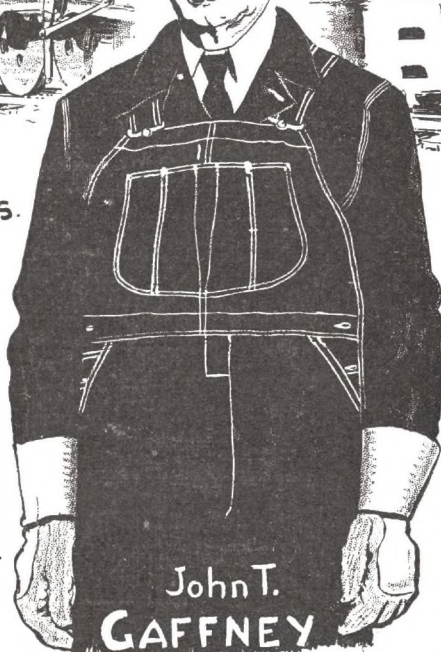
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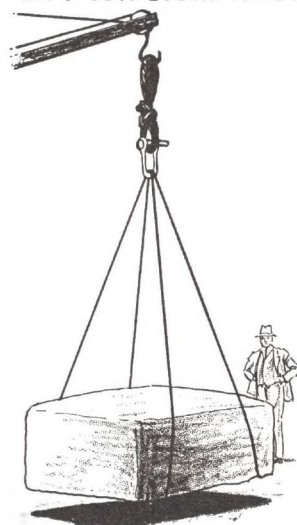
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Wizard AT JUDGING TOBACCO

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"JIMMY" HICKS has auctioned tobacco for 21 years. "Luckies," he says, "have always bought fine tobacco of good color and texture. So I've smoked Luckies for 14 years." Most other independent tobacco experts also smoke Luckies!



Have you tried a Lucky lately?..

Tobacco crops in recent years have been outstanding. New methods sponsored by the United States Government and the States, have helped the farmer grow finer cigarette tobacco. Now, as independent tobacco experts like "Jimmy" Hicks point out, Luckies have been buying the cream of these finer crops. And so Luckies are better than ever. Have you tried a Lucky lately? Try them for a week and you'll know why...WITH MEN WHO KNOW TOBACCO BEST — IT'S LUCKIES 2 TO 1

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Easy on Your Throat—
Because "IT'S TOASTED"

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SPORT STORY

JACKSON SCHOLAR