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**FAMOUS AMERICAN
ATHLETES OF
TODAY**

By
GORDON CAMPBELL



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FOREWORD

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GORDON CAMPBELL

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INTRODUCTION

Athletics During World War II

OUT of the heights of spaceless Pacific skies on December 7, 1941, sleek planes bearing the blazing red emblem of Nippon hurtled down on an unsuspecting Hawaii. The next day the United States of America was officially at war.

A welter of confusion immediately arose, but with characteristic thoroughness the American people began to put their house in order for the trying days ahead. Manufacturers of peacetime products studied blueprints for the production of guns and ammunition and plane parts and ships. Industries, institutions, and activities not considered vital to the war effort were discontinued or sharply curtailed.

Not one of the least inconsequential items considered was sports. Were athletics of value to a nation at war?

Should schools and colleges continue or step down their sports programs?

Should professional sports, baseball in particular, fold their uniforms until peace returned?

The issue was taken up in newspapers, in magazines, and even on the floor of Congress.

"Give up competitive sports for the duration," demanded one vociferous group.

Commander Gene Tunney, former world's heavyweight boxing champion, advocated calisthenics in their place. Later, incidentally, Tunney changed his views.

"Toughen our boys for battle by hardening their bodies in contact sports," cried another group, and sports factions—ready and willing to do whatever was wanted of them—waited to be told what to do.

The Navy was the first to adopt a definite program. After having flown observers to Europe since Germany and England first came to grips, the Navy found out that the toughest fighters over there were the German pilots.

The only way to make our pilots tougher than the Germans," reasoned Navy officials, "is to put them through a stiff program of athletics. They need football, boxing, wrestling, and the like

The Navy commissioned Commander Tom Hamilton to put the program into effect.

Not long afterward, in March of 1942, Presi-

dent Roosevelt gave the green light to baseball, but still sports in general did not know whether or not to go ahead full blast. On the one hand they had the Navy's directive and the President's attitude on baseball, but on the other they had some adverse public opinion, plus the request from Joseph Eastman, head of the Office of Defense Transportation, that colleges eliminate all unnecessary travel in connection with football games.

This, then, was the situation facing the sports world in America in the dark days following Pearl Harbor. Ahead a tiny light was guiding them, a flame which flickered and almost died at times, but which finally piloted sports to their rightful place in a country at war.

The Athletic Institute of the Big Ten Conference, headed by the late Major John L. Griffith, made an exhaustive study of the trials of sports. This was their report:

"For the most part, the American people seem to have accepted the idea that sports, properly administered during war, are an asset to the Nation."

Shortly before he died, in December of 1944, Major Griffith summed up the situation as follows:

"After almost three years of World War II experience, we need but look back in brief review to see plainly how effectively competitive sports

among our servicemen and women have aided in building a victorious fighting force.

“Looking back to the early weeks following Pearl Harbor, we recall the turbulence of activities so numerous and necessary to the organization and training of the millions answering the call to arms. This was a time when some raised their voices loudly in discounting the value of competitive sports for our trainees and for those backing them up on the production front. It was the opinion of this small but energetic group that we should give up our sports for the duration.

“Then came the urgent calls for replacements. We need young men! Physically fit men! Men of high morale! They must be tough, quick in their thinking, fast in their actions!

“It was then that top-ranking officials of the Army and Navy appraised and moved to utilize the basic values of competitive sports.

“Results soon confirmed the wisdom of their action. The introduction of sports as a factor in military training proved an invaluable expediter in teaching the value of teamwork, stamina, discipline, resourcefulness, and high morale.

“Today, sports programs that encourage the widest possible participation are an important part of Army, Navy, and Marine training. And sports

equipment is reaching every outpost and battle front where our armed forces are fighting and winning.

“For our security and happiness in the future, let us hope that our communities awaken to the importance of providing additional recreational facilities whereby these millions of young men and women will be enabled to maintain their high standard of physical fitness when they return to civilian life.”

Naturally Major Griffith was an advocate of sports, and more sports, during wartime; and he was joined in his stand by some of the country's outstanding political, educational, and athletic leaders.

Senator A. B. “Happy” Chandler of Kentucky, who made a tour of the battle fronts, said he was convinced that fellows who learned to take it on the football field and in other rough-and-tumble games were the fellows who could be relied upon to take a beachhead, to hang on, to carry out an assignment in the face of what seemed to be impossible odds.

“It would be a fatal mistake to curtail sports during wartime,” he concluded.

Thousands of Americans heard the opinion of a prominent authority on the subject of sports,

Douglas R. Mills, Athletic Director of the University of Illinois:

“Aside from the values that we as athletic directors place on sports values to the boy himself, values to the armed services, values to the college student body, and values to the alumni, the Government looks to spectator sports as a definite need from a national morale standpoint.

“For example, millions of Americans, not only college men but men and women in offices, in war production plants, in all walks of life, found in sports a wholesome escape over the week-end; knowing that the will-to-win, exemplified by our youngsters on the American athletic fields, is also one of the driving forces that will lead Americans to victory.”

And Elmer Layden, star fullback on Notre Dame's famed Four Horsemen and now Commissioner of the National Professional Football League, cryptically bespoke his preference for athletics over calisthenics. He said:

“My kids have always pestered me to buy them a baseball, or a football, or a bat, or a glove; but I've never heard them ask for a dumbbell or an Indian club ”

Gradually sports climbed back into their place in the sun. Of course the caliber of the teams was

not so high as in peacetime, but the public did not seem to care. Informal football teams like those of Harvard and Boston College drew more than 40,000 persons to Harvard Stadium. Boxing shows drew big crowds, although the top-flight leather-swingers like Joe Louis, Lou Jenkins, Billy Conn, and a host of others were all away in service.

Professional baseball, its ranks riddled by the loss of stars and players well in excess of 400 players in the major leagues alone, had its biggest wartime season in 1944. The majors showed a soaring interest in the game, which indicated its growing value for national morale.

Altogether, major-league turnstiles in 1944 clicked to the tune of 8,974,738 paid admissions, the largest number since peacetime 1941, which holds the record with 10,250,208 cash customers. The 1944 figure was an increase of 1,298,457 over that of 1943, and 107,821 over the total in 1942, when most of the big teams had not been hit too heavily by volunteerings and the draft.

Believing that a breakdown of the figures will prove interesting as a commentary on the revival of public approval of sports, they are presented here in tabulated form for the first three wartime seasons. They do not include approximately 175,000 fans who attended War Fund games.

AMERICAN LEAGUE

	1944	1943	1942
Detroit.....	923,176	606,287	630,845
New York.....	789,995	618,330	922,011
Chicago.....	563,539	508,962	426,874
Washington.....	525,235	574,694	403,000
St. Louis.....	508,644	214,392	255,617
Boston.....	506,975	358,275	741,026
Philadelphia.....	505,322	376,735	423,000
Cleveland.....	475,272	438,894	458,000
Totals.....	4,798,158	3,696,569	4,260,373

NATIONAL LEAGUE

	1944	1943	1942
New York.....	733,598	506,345	867,614
Pittsburgh.....	653,912	542,011	500,000
Chicago.....	640,110	510,000	590,972
Brooklyn.....	618,198	688,633	1,029,647
St. Louis.....	486,851	522,379	571,297
Cincinnati.....	431,297	430,545	470,582
Philadelphia.....	367,417	466,876	230,183
Boston.....	245,197	312,923	346,249
Totals.....	4,176,580	3,979,712	4,606,544

Both President Ford Frick of the National League and President Will Harridge of the American League were happy that baseball was able to continue, not only because of its value at home but because of its worth to the boys overseas.

In statements made especially for this volume each set forth his views.

"Baseball in wartime," said Mr. Frick, "is playing very much the same part in the lives of American men as in peace years. The men in the service

took their baseball along with them. Those who like to play get a chance during rest periods to throw and bat the ball and play games. Those who were fans at home follow the fortunes of their favorite teams by way of newspapers sent them and through radio reports.

“Official baseball here at home knows that the game is as much a part of the Nation at war as it has always been a factor in the national life during peace. We are doing our best to keep baseball worthy of its title, ‘The National Game.’ ”

Said Mr. Harridge: “Baseball forever will owe a debt to our boys in the armed forces for the interest they showed in our national game during the war period. The American League is proud of the more than 200 players it sent to the armed services; but it is even more proud of the way baseball was received so enthusiastically by our fighting men both abroad and here at home. If baseball brought some small measure of entertainment and relaxation to those fighting men, then we have been well repaid for our efforts.”

Baseball did bring entertainment and relaxation to the boys overseas. Our men in uniform not only received reports of regular-season games and the World Series; they saw stars in person, for the major leagues sponsored visits of their out-

standing personalities to practically every fighting front.

Other sports beside baseball were taken to the GI Joes and Janes. Fred Corcoran, Tournament Director for the Professional Golfers' Association, made two trips abroad, taking with him such sports heroes as Lefty Gomez of the New York Yankees and Jack Sharkey, former heavyweight boxing champion of the world. His first trip took Fred to England under the auspices of the Red Cross, and the second one took him to Africa for the USO among other celebrities of renown in the fields of sports and entertainment.

"On both shows we ran movies, gave short talks, and then threw open the meetings for questions and answers," said Fred. "You'd be surprised at the wide interest the boys had in all sports.

"My first trip to England was in 1942," he continued. "I had a chance to compare sports there with sports in the United States. We had closed many of our golf courses, but their links were still going, some a bit battle-scarred from bombing raids, to be sure, but the English carried on. One Rugby match I attended drew 40,000 spectators.

"I think sports were terrifically underrated when we entered the war. They have proven themselves since. They have played a tremendous

part in holding up morale at home and abroad, and they will play a big part in our veterans' rehabilitation program. In golf, for instance, we are building many courses at hospitals. They are called pitch-and-putt affairs; and many of the boys are helping get themselves back to normal through a mild form of golf."

The World Series games were filmed and shown to our fighting men. Reels of the more important football games were carried to the front lines in fast planes. Purchases of sports equipment were stepped up by the Army and Navy, which took about ninety per cent of all such equipment produced in the United States.

According to Col. Henry W. "Esky" Clark of the Army Special Services Division, the Army bought some \$20,000,000 of sports and game equipment in 1944 alone, and the amount was due to be doubled by the end of 1945, judging by the popularity of sports among the armed forces.

Army purchases each year alone at this time included enough equipment to field 50,000 baseball teams and 100,000 softball teams. The Navy bought enough to equip 11,000 baseball and 22,000 softball teams.

Broken down, the figures show that the Army alone annually bought 225,000 baseball gloves,

200,000 bats, and 200,000 baseballs, with an equal amount going to Welfare and Recreation Funds of local Post Exchanges.

Said Colonel Clark in an interview in New York: "The GI's don't wait for the fighting to end before they can take an interest in sports. On Saipan they were watching sports movies when Jap snipers still were around. I saw one little island in the Marshalls where there were one hardball and eight softball diamonds. One island in the Aleutians has forty softball fields. And I read that American sports are already making good use of those stadia Mussolini built in Italy!"

Out in the Pacific a service World Series was held between teams from the Army and Navy. The series had to be extended, with all games played out, because of the tremendous interest involved. The fact that the Navy won seven out of nine games did not detract from the show.

Former major-leaguers were plentiful. They included Joe Gordon, Pee-Wee Reese, Jack Hallett, Tom Ferrick, Walt Masterson, Bill Dickey, Jim Carlin, Joe Di Maggio, Schoolboy Rowe, Al Brancato, Johnny Vander Meer, and Virgil Trucks.

That series, incidentally, also saw a record for American ingenuity. The Seabees had been commissioned to build the seats, and they did a good

job. When it came time for tickets to be distributed, however, the Army, Navy, Marine, and Coast Guard all got their allotments, with the Seabees left out in the cold.

Were the Seabees stumped by this unexpected wartime sports situation?

Not a bit of it. They commandeered all available bulldozers, trucks, steam shovels, and construction equipment. They proceeded first to erect a hill overlooking the stadium, and then to build bleachers on the hill—for Seabees only. These hardy fighters wound up with the best seats in the place.

As was true of men in other walks of life, all athletes of course could not go to war. Perhaps public opinion was directed more often to outstanding stars who remained at home than to anyone else, because of the places such stars hold in the national spotlight.

It was unfortunate that this was so, for many of these boys tried to enlist and were turned down. They waited their turn in the draft and were turned down again. That they were willing to stand the glare of publicity and keep entertainment and morale at the highest level possible redounds to their credit.

As the war progressed, a more understanding

attitude on the part of the public and the servicemen themselves became more apparent, and rightfully so, for there hasn't been a case on record of draft dodging by an American athlete.

In presenting this book we take cognizance of the fact that most of the stars included in Famous American Athletes of Today, Ninth Series, were still active in wartime, and that some hit their highest peak after Pearl Harbor. We fully believe that in so doing they were performing their part on the home front.

FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES
OF TODAY
NINTH SERIES

EDDIE ARCARO

"Tops" Among Jockeys



EDDIE ARCARO

CHAPTER I

EDDIE ARCARO
"TOPS" AMONG JOCKEYS

IT was early April—lovely, fresh-eyed young April—in Kentucky, and there were sounds of horse racing in the scented air of growing verdure.

At Churchill Downs, with its rococo architecture harking back to the days of Louisville splendor, there was the talk of the coming Kentucky Derby. And there was talk of the proud three-year-old thoroughbred horses worth close to one million dollars, now on the grounds, ready to race in the event that has become a sentimental sports classic of this nation.

There is only one Derby in the United States—the Kentucky Derby. It is expertly promoted throughout the years and bathed in the sagas of swift horses and beautiful women. The commercialism of the mutuel machines is muffled by the sweet strains of "My Old Kentucky Home" and the consequent sobs of emotional racegoers.

The best three-year-old horses, sirs and ma'ams,

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in this fair country! Each colt so perfectly trained, so eager to run, so carefully brought to the Kentucky Derby through two years of gentle ministrations, patient teachings, and worried solitudes!

Now these youngsters were ready to run for the roses, as others had done in previous years. Horsemen, wise in horseflesh, were ready to talk about the quality of breeding, to quote equine caste from the studbook, to gaze analytically at the conformation, and to offer opinions.

Yet, from the *cognoscenti*—the majority of them—came this startling verdict:

“The Kentucky Derby this year is Eddie Arcaro against the field.”

And from others came this opinion, “The best race horse in America today is Eddie Arcaro!”

The horsemen didn't have to offer any further explanation. Nor did the general sports public need any further explanation. They weren't even surprised that, for the first time, a horse racing spectacle had come down to the final analysis: that, in their minds, a jockey represented the difference between horses. And the opinion was that whether in the Kentucky Derby or any other race, Arcaro certainly could be the deciding factor between victory and defeat.

There are those who will say that the year of

1944 will go down into horse-racing history as the year of unimpressive horses. Hence the strange situation where a jockey and not a horse could be the dominating figure of the racing scene. And there are those who will decry the undue emphasis on Arcaro. They will add that he did not ride the winner of the Kentucky Derby; that he could not bring Greentree Stable's Stir-Up home for the rose wreath; and that the honors went instead to Calumet Farm's Pensive, ridden by the dwarflike Conn McCreary.

But throughout the year, the racing intelligentsia still considered Arcaro the best workman of the thoroughbred pilots. They insisted that any horse he rode would have to be given a couple of extra lengths in the figuring of a race. And when the lists of great jockeys of all times are compiled, Arcaro must be placed there with such immortals as Snapper Garrison, Earl Sande, the Fator brothers, the Parkes, and the rest, who became chapters in the colorful annals of a popular and spectacular sport.

The exploits of Arcaro never have been romanticized. He has no nicknames. He leads a quiet off-track life. He's not handsome, and he's not bizarre. He was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, on February 19, 1916, the first of three children. The others are

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two sisters. His family then moved to Newport, Kentucky, across the river from Cincinnati, and thus he became a Kentuckian. The Latonia race track was only a short distance away, and Eddie, like so many other kids, hung around the track. And, like so many kids, he hoped that some day he would become a jockey.

As he tells of these days, he doesn't remember anything unusual in them. He went to school, like any normal boy, and had the ordinary experiences of boyhood. Even around the race track, so he says, there wasn't anything that made people look at the big-nosed youngster with the long neck and say that here was a boy destined for greatness.

Eddie walked horses—"cooling out hots." He ponyed horses—leading horses to the race track for workouts. Later he was permitted to gallop horses—working them in the gray dawn. Thus he served his novitiate the routine way, learning the art of a good seat and of establishing control of his mount; and acquiring the stop-watch mind so essential in being able to take a horse over the track at certain speeds.

He showed something, to be sure. But no rich stable came to him with a bag of gold and glowing promises. His first contract was to C. E. Davidson. And who was C. E. Davidson? A good horseman,

but not a prominent one, nor a very successful one, either. He was just one of the many sportsmen known as "gypts"—short for gypsies—who lived the gypsy life of the horseman with mediocre horses and uncertain income.

It was a colorful life, but not exactly a luxurious one. "Gypsies" didn't travel in style all the time, and they didn't hit only the major tracks. But Arcaro will remember the day at Agua Caliente, back in 1932, when he rode his first winner aboard Eagle Bird. He reached the turning point of his career with that first winner. And it was appropriately named, too, for Arcaro progressed until he rang up eagle birds over all his rivals.

Still there was nothing spectacular in his young life. For his victory in Mexico didn't rush him right to the head of the list. He was leading rider at Sportsmen's Park, Chicago, for two successive years; but that's a half-mile track in Chicago. Yet he was learning all the time, becoming stronger and smarter, and acquiring that riding sense which is the line of demarcation between ordinary riders and the greats.

After two years he was signed by the Calumet Farm—the stable owned by Warren Wright of Chicago, the baking-powder king. That was in 1934; and he rode some good horses for Calumet

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horses like Nellie Flag, Hadagal, Calumet Dick, and Sun Teddy. He was beginning to show that horses run lengths better for Arcaro. And in the fall of 1936 he signed up with the Greentree Stable, for which organization he has continued to work ever since.

There still was no legend for Arcaro. Becoming one of the first ten riders in the country, he never made the headlines as the leading jockey of the country, the boy with the most victories. But he won two Kentucky Derby events, with Lawrin and with Whirlaway. And, it might be added, the trainer each time, although for two different stables, was Ben Jones, Plain Ben of Parnell.

Ask Ben Jones about Arcaro and his eyes light up in admiration.

He's not infallible, this Arcaro. He makes his mistakes. He guessed wrong in the Kentucky Derby one year, when he had his choice of the two Greentree starters. He chose Devil Diver; but Shut Out was the winner.

Arcaro goes along through life serenely, but, he insists, without great fuss. He married Ruth Miskell of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, in 1937, and they have two children. There's Carolyn, two years older than baby Robert. Arcaro makes his home in Miami these days, although his family comes up

during the summer racing and stays with him in New York.

Arcaro never has had any bad falls; but he did have a trick one in the spring of 1944 when, down at Tropical Park, in Miami, his mount, three lengths in front, suddenly jumped the rail into the infield and unseated him. A sprained wrist was the worst damage.

There is no colorful story in the reputation he has of being anything but angelic on the race track; of having been suspended at times, but always for roughriding or some other maneuver used in trying to win. And, for that matter, he spent part of 1943 on the ground for that very reason—for roughriding after repeated warnings had been given.

In the meantime the Arcaro legend began to mushroom. But in the winter of 1943-44 it looked as though that Arcaro-legend mushroom would burst like a puffball. For when Arcaro was reinstated and began riding again, the horses did not win for him.

His own stable, Greentree, had most of its horses in South Carolina. That was perhaps one reason. Another reason might have been that Arcaro had not been riding races for several months and for the time had lost his touch. Maybe he

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wasn't in riding condition. Jockeys will tell anyone that a man can be in good shape and yet not be properly conditioned for riding in races.

There was the afternoon when he rode his own stable's Stir-Up, later to become the Kentucky Derby favorite, to victory in the \$25,000 Flamingo Handicap for three-year-olds. He rode so brilliantly a judged race that he made the fainthearted but fleet Director J. E. wilt in the stretch. He came back with Greentree's horse Four Freedoms, in the Widener Handicap for \$50,000 and for older horses, and it was there that he turned in what may have been his greatest bit of horsemanship.

Calumet had the favorite in that race, Sun Again, a truly worthy favorite. Arcaro's rival for riding honors, Teddy Atkinson (The Slasher), was on Sun Again. They came into the home stretch of that race with Four Freedoms in front, but with Sun Again making his charge. Sun Again even went in front by about a head, and it was felt that the race was all over. Four Freedoms wasn't supposed to have that stretch run.

But Arcaro kept the horse going. Few realized it, but with seventy yards to go, one of the stirrups broke away.

Would Arcaro be able to maintain that firm grip with his legs?

He did, somehow. He hand-rode Four Freedoms, made that horse find some courage and just one last gasp of extra speed. And Four Freedoms won by a head.

The stands roared their tribute to Arcaro. It was then that the wise men of the back stretch began to compare Arcaro with the greats. They compared him with Georgie Woolf, The Iceman, the brawny jockey with the icewater in his veins. And the consensus was that Eddie Arcaro rated ahead of The Iceman.

His name now was a headline familiar. He was making money. But there wasn't any change in him. And he acquired a new cheering section—the gyps, the poor horsemen with the poor horses. Because, now that he was top rider, he would still accept their mounts and would ride them for the mere riding fee, when he could have ridden for the men with money for large amounts.

He did that often, staying down there in Miami when the rich stables moved North. He's done it in the North, wherever he went.

And he himself says, startled to think that anyone would find this unusual, "Of course I'll ride for the gyps. They're the men who keep horse racing alive. They're the men who give jockeys their first chances. They're the ones who always help

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out. A jockey can't become too big for the little men of racing.

"Jockeys? Why, that rule holds good in any kind of work. It should be true of all life, that you can't ever become too big for the little men, because you were a little guy once yourself, and they started you along. And some day, when you're through as a top man, you may be a little man again, and you'll need help."

Arcaro has never been the leading rider of the country. He says there is no real reward (except the money) in riding the most winners. It's not worth while. He doesn't say he's an idealist, but he points out that nobody ever has thought of awarding a trophy—a plate of silver or a plaque—to the man who has ridden the most winners.

"That would be something worth keeping," he says, "but there isn't any such thing offered at the present time."

Then he goes on:

"To be the leading rider of the year—in the matter of wins—a jockey has to ride the full twelve months. You have to be a little money hungry; and sometimes even then it doesn't pay. A jockey riding good horses in big races can make more in part of the year than the leading rider does all through the year. There's a strain to racing; and

that's why I'll take vacations. I'll go on fishing trips, just to get away.

"Don't forget, a tired jockey isn't a good one. He goes stale. He loses the touch. He works sluggishly mentally, and his horse is the first one to find that out. He can't make decisions quickly enough. He fights his horse and his horse fights him. There has to be an understanding between the horse and the rider. If there isn't, that horse won't run a true race."

And he talks about various horses—the good horses he has ridden and the great horses he has ridden. When asked about the horse that he likes best, he doesn't name Lawrin or Whirlaway, the two Derby winners, despite the fact that Whirlaway became the greatest money-winner of all time. He picks Devil Diver, the horse which he selected for the Kentucky Derby and thus missed a third winner in the Churchill Downs spectacle.

In naming Devil Diver he shows himself a sentimentalist, for he says, "I claim that he's as great as any I've ever ridden, because of his racing heart. I've ridden horses with better records, but those were sound horses, with four good legs.

"Devil Diver? He has only three good legs. The other one isn't so hot. Some days it feels fine, and some days it's pretty bad. But whether that leg

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is all right or sore, he'll run his heart out. He may not win, but he's trying his best. If his legs were as great as his racing spirit, he'd make them all run away and hide. That's why I love him. Maybe, too, it's because I knew him from the time he was a baby. Those others were horses that I'd been hired to ride. They were part of the work. But Devil Diver and I are friends."

Whatever it was, Arcaro wasn't trotting his mounts back to the winner's circle. The horsemen who gave him his chances were horsemen without prestige, horsemen with cheap protégés; horsemen with short money. But they came to him and offered him mounts. He'd come back after the race and tell them about their horses—whether the horse would be ready the next time, or whether something had happened that prevented a winner this time.

And then, down there at Hialeah, the Arcaro legend swung back into full glory. It was Arcaro of old, the Arcaro who could break a horse on top or rate a horse off the pace. It was the Arcaro who could sense what his horse would do and appreciate what the other horses could do.

This was the Arcaro who could move up a horse several lengths in the ratings. He could whip or he could hand-ride. He was showing that he was

the greatest horsebacker among them all during the year.

Oh, he didn't win every time he rode! But he did ride both ends of the daily double four times in one week and not all the time with favorites. That isn't done with mirrors!

He rode other winners. And whether the horse was a winner or a loser, the owner of the horse knew that the thoroughbred had been given a good ride.

So that's the Arcaro who, regardless of who finishes the year with the most winners, has become the top man in his craft. He loves riding. He wants to keep on riding. He has no great desire to own horses or train them.

"Riding, to me," he explains, "is something swell. There's something new, something exciting, every time. I want to keep on riding for years. I don't have to worry too much about my weight. I can do about 110 pounds. I stay in good shape all the time. Maybe I'll find the time when I'll have to stay around 115 pounds. But if I can deliver for the owner or trainer, they won't mind my having the extra pounds.

"I know how to ride. I don't know enough about the handling of horses, although I've been around them since I was thirteen years old. I may,

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perhaps, some day. But, until that day comes, I want to ride, to enjoy the life of the jockey, the friendships a jockey makes. Yes, even the disappointments that come along; they're part of the game. And it's a wonderful game."

As the racetrackers will chant, "And he's a wonderful guy."

LOUIS (LOU) BOUDREAU

Baseball's "Wonder Boy"



LOUIS (LOU) BOUDREAU

CHAPTER II

LOUIS (LOU) BOUDREAU
BASEBALL'S "WONDER BOY"

CLEVELAND'S compact League Park was dark. Around the entrance a gusty wind played tag with dry leaves. It was late November, and the baseball season of 1941 was nearly two months past.

Upstairs in the offices lights glowed. Reporters blinked rapidly as they entered and took off their coats. Photographers blew on their fingers as they rigged up their cameras.

From the inner office appeared Alva Bradley, President of the Cleveland Indians, and the reporters straightened in their chairs. They turned around as the outer door opened again. In came Lou Boudreau, the Indians' kid shortstop who had won rookie of the year award only the year previously.

A couple of the boys stepped up to shake Lou's hand, but President Bradley intervened before they could greet him.

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“Excuse us for a few minutes, gentlemen,” he said with a smile. He ushered Boudreau into the inner office and closed the door.

About five minutes later Bradley threw the door wide open. “Gentlemen,” he said, “come in and meet our new manager.”

In that moment baseball history was made, for Lou Boudreau became the youngest player ever to be named to manage a major-league club. Only twenty-four years old and only a few years removed from the University of Illinois campus, Boudreau was younger by three years than Stanley (Bucky) Harris when he became the original “boy manager” of the Washington Senators in 1924, and younger by two years than Joe Cronin when he was appointed Washington manager in 1933.

Boudreau’s appointment came as a complete surprise. Although it had been rumored a few weeks previously that the slight, dark-haired, serious young shortstop was being considered for the post, it was thought that his youth and inexperience in the majors weighed much too heavily against him.

As events have proved, the choice was not only a wise one but a popular one. The boy with sharp eyes, big hands, and clear head immediately took

over. The responsibility was his and he shouldered it. He welcomed advice, but decisions he reserved for himself. He proved as much of a leader in professional baseball as he had in college baseball. His enthusiasm was infectious, and with very few exceptions his players have been with him to a man.

"I know it's a big job, but I'm going to do the best I can," he told the reporters at his first press interview that night of November 25, 1941. He proved he was not stepping blindly into the job, that he had thought it out and already had made important decisions, by the way he answered questions fired at him by Cleveland's eager sports press. Here are a few samples of his statements:

"We're going to have a hustling ball club. If anyone doesn't co-operate, we'll get rid of him."

"When we get to training camp, every man has got to fight for his job, and that means everyone—including myself."

"My coaches? I'll name them in a few days. I especially want at least one older man on whom I can rely. You can't see everything that goes on in a ball game, when you are playing."

He answered every query straight from the shoulder, looking each questioner in the eye. At only one point did he hedge.

“Are you going to run the club without any interference from the front office?” one reporter asked jokingly.

Lou smiled. “I didn’t even hear that question,” he said. The boy had learned fast.

Boudreau’s first contract with Cleveland called for two years at the post. The complete confidence which the club had in him was reflected in the fact that President Bradley left immediately after pictures had been taken, leaving Lou to do his own talking. His second contract, which he signed with the Indians in the fall of 1944, called for a three-year span.

Young Lou was not chosen immediately as boss of the Indians. Bradley had conducted a search for more than two months and had interviewed upwards of a dozen candidates. Not one of them measured up to Boudreau in what Bradley called his “personal record.”

“The more I examined other candidates,” Bradley declared, “the more I saw how valuable Lou and his gift for leadership would be to us. I was certain he would be thoroughly respected by the press, the public, and the players. He is a great ballplayer and a fine young man.”

Boudreau does not drink or smoke, and only on the field when he is fighting for every inch does he

become excited enough to lose his temper. Even then he does not lose control of his language, although his voice can be heard in the next county.

He hates injustice. Once when Johnny Berardino of the St. Louis Browns had spiked his 200-pound pal, Ray Mack, Lou flew to Ray's defense with his 160 pounds.

Louis Boudreau (he lists no middle name) was born July 17, 1917, at Harvey, Illinois, where he still makes his home with his wife, the former Della DeRuitter, and their two small children.

He went to high school in Harvey and from there to the University of Illinois, where his qualities of leadership quickly became apparent. As a junior he captained the basketball team. He was captain-elect in baseball the same year, when it was discovered that the Cleveland club was paying him money on the guarantee that he would become their property as soon as he signed a professional baseball contract.

He left college after his junior year in 1938, but secured his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1940 after having completed his senior year in two off-season semesters.

Strangely enough, Boudreau's fame at Illinois lay in basketball rather than in baseball. This was probably due to the fact that he played only one

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year on the diamond to two on the court. And yet Lou was no scoring star. Big Ten basketball followers remember him as strategy director and leader of the Illinis' floor tactics, and they still count him as one of the finest players in the conference. It was at Illinois that his quality of leadership first began to bloom.

Oddly, Boudreau was not a shortstop in college. He was a third baseman; and as a third baseman he went to Cedar Rapids, a Cleveland farm, in 1938. He had not been there long, however, when the Indian management ordered him to be shifted to shortstop.

"It was a long-range experiment," one of the Cleveland front office men later explained. "We had just come up with Ken Keltner at third base, and we knew he would be there for a good while. We needed a shortstop, and we had hopes that Boudreau could fill the bill."

That was one experiment which worked out to the eminent satisfaction of both parties.

Early in 1939 Boudreau went to spring training camp with the Indians, but when the season started he was sent to Buffalo of the International League along with Ray Mack. The two formed such a successful combination as a keystone pair that Buffalo fans were incensed and threatened

to boycott the park when Cleveland sent for them in August.

Boudreau and Mack clicked from the start. The latter's name was really Mlckovsky, but was shortened to fit a box score. They not only burned up the International League with more than 110 double plays while they were at Buffalo, but they became fast friends off the diamond as well.

Buffalo fans especially like to recall Boudreau's hitting. His stance, which has undergone several changes, usually finds his hip pocket practically in the dugout. This may have caused some students of hitting to raise their eyebrows, but on one weekend Lou demonstrated his peculiar, dramatic style effectively.

Playing against Rochester on a Saturday in June of 1939, Lou was at bat six times. He banged out five hits, including a home run, a triple, a double, and two singles. The next day he was up five times, and he connected for three doubles and a homer.

Naturally, Buffalo fans felt cheated when not only Boudreau but Mack as well were recalled by Cleveland.

"What is there to go out to the ball park for?" was their reaction.

With Cleveland both players stuck, and the pair

went on to earn a reputation as one of the best middle-of-the-diamond combinations in the majors. After just a year and a half in the minors, Boudreau was in the big leagues for good.

In fifty-three games with Cleveland in 1939, Boudreau batted for .258, but do not despise that average. His worth to the team could not be measured in base hits.

When Boudreau reported to the Indians, on August 7 to be exact, the club was in fifth place, with fifty-one games won and forty-seven lost. Less than two months later the team was comfortably settled in third place and breathing on the neck of second-place Boston, with eighty-seven victories and sixty-seven defeats.

These bare figures do not mean much until you break them down. With Boudreau sparking the club at shortstop, Cleveland in the last two months won thirty-six games and lost but twenty, which is .643 baseball. And as you will remember, Cincinnati won the National League pennant by playing .630 baseball.

Naturally the Indians had high hopes as they headed for the 1940 season. Imagine their disappointment, then, when Boudreau came up with a broken ankle in spring training!

It happened on March 18 during a game with

the Phillies. In the first inning Boudreau led off with a single to right field. Ben Chapman came to bat, and the hit-and-run was on. Lou started off with the pitch, Chapman singling between first and second. As Boudreau rounded second he hit the bag hard with his foot.

"Something seemed to give in my ankle," Lou said later. "It was the same one I broke when I was playing sand-lot baseball back in Harvey."

Ironically, Boudreau had been talking only that day with C. C. Slapnicka, then vice president of the club, about getting a \$2,500 bonus if he played 154 games during the 1940 season.

The team was disheartened, for Lou did not know when he could return to the line-up.

"If Boudreau is out, our chances are gone," one veteran player moaned. "He's the guy who holds this club together."

Lou fooled everybody. He started the season and played not only the whole 154 games but one extra for good measure. As a matter of fact, the day after he broke his ankle he was back out on the ball field, his leg in a cast and crutches under his arm—playing catch!

That same ankle, incidentally, was the cause of Lou's being rejected by the Army when he took his physical examination in May of 1944. An

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arthritic condition had developed which made the Army doctors classify him 4-F. Boudreau still has to have the ankle taped for every game he plays.

Boudreau played through the 1940 season, at the end of which the Chicago Chapter of the Baseball Writers' Association voted him as the most valuable rookie for 1940 and presented Lou with the J. Louis Comiskey Memorial Award. Besides this, Boudreau received the bonus that he had discussed with Slapnicka and in addition signed a 1941 contract calling for \$10,000, which was double his 1940 pay.

The young shortstop's courage was tested that 1940 season, for two weeks before the campaign ended he was threatened with appendicitis. He refused to leave the club until the race was over. The minute the last out had been registered, Boudreau was on his way to a hospital.

It was after the following season that Boudreau became manager of the Indians, and it is a curious fact that in 1941 he had his poorest year at the plate. His .257 average was his lowest by thirty-one points and hardly foretold that three years later he would win the American League's batting crown.

Thus in 1944, for the second time in his comparatively short major-league career, Boudreau

made history. He became the first player in forty-four years in the American League to manage a club the whole season and win the batting championship the same year. Only two other National Leaguers ever did the trick—Adrian (Cap) Anson, who won the Senior Circuit title in 1879, '81, '87, and '88 in his twenty years as manager; and Rogers Hornsby, who hit .403 when he managed the Cardinals in 1925.

Other baseball greats have had the opportunity, but not one except these three has been able to tie a managerial year with a batting championship. The list includes such famous swingers of the willow wand as Joe Cronin, Mel Ott, Mickey Cochrane, George Sisler, Ty Cobb, Nap Lajoie, Bill Terry, and Tris Speaker.

Lou answered with his bat a question that Cleveland sports writers had put to him the night they first met him as manager.

"Will the added responsibilities of management handicap you as a player?" the scribes wanted to know.

"Only time will tell about that," Boudreau answered, smiling. And time did tell.

In 1944 Lou led the American League with 44 doubles, and he became the fifth Cleveland player to win the batting championship of the Junior

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Circuit. Predecessors included Lajoie, Elmer Flick, Speaker, and Lou Fonseca. In addition the occasion marked the first time he had batted over .300 in the majors. He also set a new standard for American League shortstops with only nineteen errors while handling 874 chances for a .978 mark. He made a new record in the majors by participating in 134 double plays, which was six more than the mark set by Horace Ford of Cincinnati and twelve more than the former American League mark Lou himself made in 1943.

The details of how Boudreau won the batting championship are almost a story in themselves. Back in July, Lou just made the weekly Big Ten of American League hitters. Ahead of him were three Red Sox swingers, Bobby Doerr, Pete Fox, and Bob Johnson, and six other players. Steadily Lou moved upwards from his .301 average of July to one of .318 on September 19. He was then in fourth place, with the same three Boston sluggers ahead of him.

On September 26 Boudreau had inched into third place with a .324 mark. Johnson was still in the van at .326. Doerr, who by this time had left for the Army, was frozen at .325. Pete Fox had dropped out of the race with .316.

The final week came. Doerr was stationary; and

the race became strictly a two-man duel between Boudreau and Johnson. Lou kept the pressure on and inched up his average. Johnson tried too hard and fell off to .324, Boudreau finally winning the title with a .327 average.

Lou has had many great days in baseball. On September 14, 1940, in Boston, he came up with twelve assists, just one short of the record set by Bob Reeves of Washington in 1927. Unfortunately, Boudreau made an error or he would have tied the record. In each of two innings he had three assists.

In Yankee Stadium on August 16, 1944, Boudreau found himself without a catcher, due to injuries, heat prostration, and pinch-hitting strategy. Consequently Lou, a quarter of a million dollars worth of shortstop, went behind the bat. His previous experience with the big mitt had consisted of one inning in Cleveland two years previously and a few sand-lot games as a kid.

The point was that Lou would go to any lengths to win a ball game.

"How in the world," said one of Cleveland's veteran writers at the time, "can you help being for a kid like that?"

Despite his managerial honors, his batting championship, and his rookie award, Boudreau

says his biggest thrill on the diamond came a year to the day after he broke in with Cleveland. The date was August 7, 1940, and the Indians were playing the Chicago White Sox.

Johnny Rigney was pitching for Jimmy Dykes. Boudreau had always considered him one of the toughest hurlers to hit.

"The first inning didn't lessen my impression of Rigney," Boudreau later declared, "for I flied to Mike Kreevich in center field for the third out."

In the fourth inning Lou was the first man up, and, as he tells the story, he was "a little sore because the Sox had a one-run lead, thanks to a grounder by Taft Wright that I was slow in getting.

"I was still using that crazy stance of mine," he said, "holding my elbows out about a foot from my body and the bat up high. Rigney wound up and threw me a fast ball, high on the inside. I banged the pitch into the left-field stands for a homer to tie the score.

"Then in the fifth I came up again, this time with two on and two out. Johnny fooled me, and I rolled out to shortstop.

"In the seventh it was my turn to bat again, and this time Ben Chapman was on first and Al Smith, our pitcher, on second. We were behind—3-2.

Rigney made the mistake of throwing another fast ball high and inside. I hit that one out of the park, too. The homer put us ahead 5-3.

“In the last half of the same inning Rigney himself got a double, and Manager Oscar Vitt took out our pitcher, Smith. While we were waiting for Harry Eisenstat to finish warming up, Johnny called me over to second base.

“‘They told me you didn’t like high, inside, fast balls,’ Rigney said. ‘I’ve learned my lesson, and I’ll be hanged if I’ll ever throw you another pitch like that.’

“I was up once more in that game, in the ninth. As I stepped into the batter’s box, Rigney called to me from the mound, ‘Remember what I told you. No more high and inside!’

“But darned if he didn’t throw the first ball in the same place,” Lou went on. “He surprised me so that I forgot to swing. Johnny chuckled as he toed the rubber. Then he threw me a low ball, outside, and I hit it over second for a single to drive in two more runs. With two homers and a single I had batted in six runs.”

Here Lou paused to laugh. “You should have seen that Rigney. He was so mad he kicked the dirt around the mound and walked in circles muttering to himself.”

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Not long afterwards, one day in Cleveland, the White Sox were in town, and Boudreau walked by the visitors' dugout.

Rigney let out a roar. "There he is, boys, the guy who likes 'em high and who likes 'em low. You figure him out. I can't."

Boudreau likes to recall that day; and he never again will admit that he can't hit Rigney's pitching.

"Really though," says Lou, and here his modesty gets the better of him, "I was just lucky."

For his second biggest thrill as far as playing baseball goes, Boudreau will take the All-Star game in New York in 1942.

"I was the lead-off man," he declares, "and I hit Morton Cooper's second pitch into the stands for a home run. That was a real thrill, because I had heard what a great pitcher Mort was, and that was the first time I had ever faced him. But don't get the idea that because I homered off him, I think any less of Cooper's abilities. He's still a great pitcher, and he seems to be getting better every year."

As a shortstop Boudreau has few peers in the major leagues. No one has a better knack of going to his right, coming up with the ball, and nailing the runner at first.

"I believe I got that knack of skidding to my right and coming to a sudden stop in my basketball training," Lou declares. "You have to skid, slide, and stop quickly on the basketball court, and it just came natural to me to do the same trick on the diamond."

Lou's father had been a third baseman in an independent league in Illinois as a youth, but his son much preferred to catch when he was going to high school.

"If you want to be a ball player," his father said, "you'll last longer at third base."

Whereupon Lou became a hot corner guardian; and there he stayed until the Cleveland management ordered him switched to shortstop.

Boudreau says that it was while he was at Buffalo that he really learned inside baseball.

"I didn't know anything about shifting for this or that batter when the count was three and nothing on the hitter," he said. "But Steve O'Neill, George Uhle, and Greg Mulleavy straightened me out and put me wise to the real tricks of playing short. What they didn't tell me, Oscar Vitt, Oscar Melillo, and Johnny Bassler did, when I joined the Indians."

In Cleveland Boudreau is considered the finest competitor since Ty Cobb. When the pressure is

greatest, he always comes up with his best plays. He breaks quickly on a ground ball, and that in the last analysis is the secret of his exceptional fielding; that, and his large, capable hands which receive a ball quickly and surely.

It is a rare game when Boudreau does not turn in a sensational play, and many a Cleveland pitcher owes his victory to Lou's fielding in the pinches.

There were many who thought that Lou was too young to be appointed manager of a big-league club. They did not know that Boudreau had been the acknowledged field director of the club almost from the moment he first donned a Cleveland uniform. Players older both in years and in point of service deferred to his superior judgment willingly and respectfully.

One baseball immortal who followed Boudreau's progress was struck by his many qualities of leadership, fire, clean living, and good play. He was Tris Speaker, who managed the Indians from 1919 to 1926, and who led them to their only pennant in 1920.

In an off-the-record statement two weeks before Lou became manager, Tris declared: "He's my boy. If I had the say-so, I would name him right now. He has given the Indians their first inspira-

tion from the field in fifteen years. I wouldn't worry about his age or anything else."

As events have proved, Speaker was right.

LOUIS BOUDREAU

Born July 17, 1917, at Harvey, Ill. Height, 5.10½. Weight, 163.

Brown eyes and brown hair. Throws and bats right-handed.

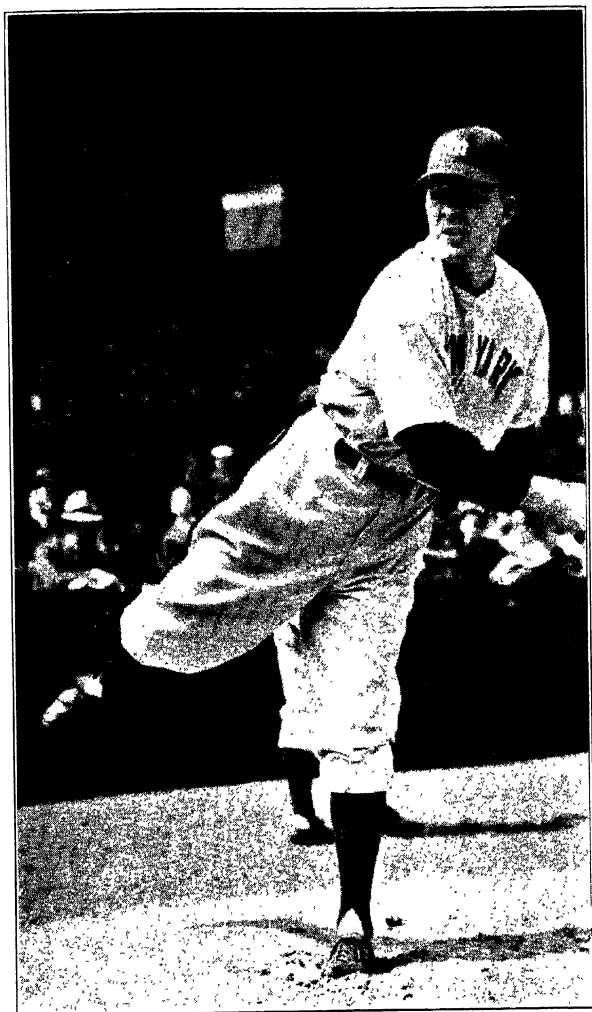
Year	Club	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1938	Cleveland	Amer.	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
1938	Cedar Rapids	I.I.I.	60	231	56	67	13	4	3	29	.290
1939	Buffalo	Int.	115	481	88	159	32	7	17	57	.331
1939	Cleveland	Amer.	53	225	42	58	15	4	0	19	.258
1940	Cleveland	Amer.	155	627	97	185	46	10	9	101	.295
1941	Cleveland	Amer.	148	579	95	149	45	8	10	56	.257
1942	Cleveland	Amer.	147	506	57	143	18	10	2	58	.283
1943	Cleveland	Amer.	152	539	69	154	32	7	3	67	.286
1944	Cleveland	Amer.	150	584	91	191	45	5	3	67	.327
Major League Totals			706	3061	451	880	201	44	27	368	.288

ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

Year	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1940	American	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
1941	American	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	1.000
1942	American	4	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	.250
All-Star Game Totals		6	1	3	0	0	0	1	2	.500

SPURGEON FERDINAND
(SPUD) CHANDLER

“Yankee Mound Ace”



SPURGEON FERDINAND (SPUD) CHANDLER

CHAPTER III

SPURGEON FERDINAND (SPUD) CHANDLER
"YANKEE MOUND ACE"

ON a bright October afternoon in the fall of 1943, Spud Chandler stood on the pitcher's mound at Yankee Stadium. The tall, curly-haired star of the New York Yankee hurling staff let his blue eyes wander over the great crowd of 68,676 roaring fans. In his hand he fingered a baseball, soon to be fired toward the plate in the opening pitch of the first World Series game against the St. Louis Cardinals.

To the crowd, Chandler appeared the cool, capable New York hurler who had walked off with the season's American League pitching honors—a blazing .833 winning percentage and a neat 1.64 earned-run average, lowest in the league in twenty-four years. Not one spectator could have guessed that for the moment Spud Chandler had forgotten the World Series.

Chandler was deep in thought. As he stood there waiting for his warm-up pitches with Bill

Dickey, he was mentally recalling the first time he had gone to that same pitcher's mound and had let his eyes rove over the broad reaches of mammoth Yankee Stadium.

"Just for a while," he later recalled, "I was seeing myself as I had stood on that very spot fourteen years before. Then, I was a football player for the University of Georgia, and we were practicing in the Stadium for a game with New York University the next day."

That occasion had marked the first time Chandler had ever seen the inside of a big-league park. As his mind sped backward through the years, memories came rushing. He saw himself a trim, well-proportioned halfback whose thoughts should have been on football, but whose ambitions lay wholly with baseball.

He remembered how he had strolled away from his teammates, who were punting and passing and testing for wind currents; and how he had planted his football cleats on the Yankees' pitching mound. He recalled how, oblivious to the incongruity of the situation, he had wound up, and with the easy delivery that later was to bring him fame, had sent a fast, imaginary baseball spinning toward the plate.

"Some day," he had promised himself, "I'll be

back here again. I'm going to be a big-league pitcher."

That was in 1929. Chandler correctly foresaw his own future. But it is doubtful if he saw the years of struggle in between, the years of disappointment, toil, and near failure which might have sent a less determined athlete back to the farm.

He couldn't have foreseen the injuries which held him back, nor the operation that had to be performed on his pitching arm, any more than he could have prophesied that one day he would be tops among American League hurlers.

Perhaps some of his earlier disappointments or possibly some of his previous triumphs as he climbed the ladder of success flashed through Chandler's mind as he waited to pitch the 1943 series opener.

He smiled as he noticed the one big difference in the Stadium's appearance. On that October day, the fifth to be exact, the seats were practically filled. Fourteen years before they had been empty, and only the wind whistling through the girders had borne witness to his vow.

Chandler's reverie was cut short as he brought himself back to the reality of 1943. His daydream had not been for long, but perhaps it was long enough to give him added determination. He pro-

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ceeded to hurl the Yankees to a 4-2 victory and started them on the road toward regaining the world's championship mantle they had lost to those same Cardinals the year before.

Just six months later, Spud Chandler joined the United States Army; and it was in the uniform of a private with the 65th Infantry Division at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, that he received one of baseball's greatest honors. With high Army officers participating in a special ceremony at the post, Chandler on September 9, 1944, was presented with an engraved wrist watch, as the American League's Most Valuable Player for 1943.

"That ceremony," says the Georgia-born farm boy simply, "was one of the high points of my life. I was proud of my career in baseball. I was even prouder of serving my country. But I was proudest of all that those two phases of my life were brought together."

Perhaps scenario writers and others with a flair for the dramatic would have considered Yankee Stadium and Chandler's symbolic pitching mound a more fitting locale for the presentation, but in a way the Army camp surroundings were eminently appropriate.

As he stood at attention in the presence of the officers, Chandler was reminded of his first big-

league start, of his two victories in five World Series games, of his triumph in his single All-Star game performance, and of the many thrills and conquests which already had studded his short but brilliant career.

It was a long road that Chandler had traveled, one that had many detours through the minors. He found train tickets in his pockets for Springfield, for Binghamton, for Syracuse, for Minneapolis, for Oakland, for Portland, and for Newark, before finally he could move his belongings into New York City for good.

Once he almost quit because the road to the majors was so long, but the mood did not last. His determination was too strong—and that very same determination, incidentally, proved to be one of his best traits as a pitcher in the big time.

Manager Joe McCarthy of the Yankees was quick to laud this trait after Spud had left for the Army the latter part of April, 1944.

“Chandler was determined to win,” he declared one day when his Yankees were fighting for the pennant with the Boston Red Sox, Detroit Tigers, and St. Louis Browns, in the closing days of the 1944 race. “He let nothing hold him back, and he started out every game pitching as hard in the first inning as he did in the last. He worked like a

Trojan all the way. From the time he threw the first ball he was all business. He never let up."

McCarthy referred to Chandler as "Spurge," as do all of the ace right-hander's friends. As a matter of fact, Chandler always signs his name that way. "Spud" was a nickname tagged to him by a sports writer when Chandler was with the Newark Bears; and it was a name Chandler did not especially like.

Spurge was a particular favorite of McCarthy's because he was not a problem pitcher. He always worked hard to take care of himself. Even on days when he was not slated for mound duty, he kept himself in trim by shagging flies in the outfield. The day before he was to pitch, he watched his diet carefully, with pretty Mrs. Chandler helping him in this department when the Yankees were at home. His other precautions were just as simple and effective.

"I always avoided cold drinks which might make me perspire too much and weaken me in the late innings," he declared, "and I always managed to get nine full hours of sleep."

With his determination, his capacity for work, and his unceasing efforts to keep himself in shape, it was little wonder that he made good with the McCarthy clan. Truth to tell, the chunky New

York boss ranks him as good a pitcher as Lefty Gomez and Red Ruffing, his two great Yankee hurlers of the mid-thirties. Of course Chandler was not around as long as Gomez and Ruffing, but while in a New York uniform and especially during his last year, he ranked right alongside them.

Like all pitchers, Chandler fancies himself quite a hitter. He is perfectly willing to sit down and talk about the home runs he has hit. As a matter of fact, Spud was not the worst hitting pitcher in the league, as his .258 average for '43 attests; and he actually has banged out a few homers. Once he hit two in one game—but don't get him started on the subject.

"Spurge was a pretty good boy up there at the plate," McCarthy declared. "A pitcher couldn't get careless with him, because he had the power to put the ball out of the park."

Chandler's best pitch was a low sinker. In fact, that was about the only pitch he had when he hit the majors. He had the necessary physical qualifications—six feet of height, 180 pounds of weight, large hands, and long fingers that could practically wrap themselves right around a baseball—but his stock of pitches was strictly limited.

Spud was smart enough to know that he would not stick around long if he did not widen his

repertoire, so he began to look around for models who might be useful.

"I really didn't have to look too far," Spurge drawls as he goes back to those early days in the majors. "There were a few right good boys on the club with me who could teach me all I wanted to know."

From Red Ruffing he acquired a slider, which quickly became his chief reliance. Spud called it his pay-off pitch.

From Fireman Johnny Murphy he borrowed a curve. When he left for the service, it was still not a great curve, but it did prove effective when he needed it, and he felt confident that it would steadily improve.

From Tiny Bonham he got a fork ball, which became Spud's change of pace. And from Swampy Donald he learned how to throw a screwball, although he found difficulty mastering the pitch.

"I could break it off a foot," he said, "but blamed if I knew where the thing was going when I let it loose."

Chandler plans to work on it and save it for the time when his fast ball begins to slow down.

With this increased assortment of deliveries and with his intense competitive spark, it was little wonder that Chandler became the standout hurler

of 1943. He allowed nothing to interfere with his performance on the mound, as rival teams in general and Umpire Harry Geisel in particular found to their sorrow. The rest of the American League at least had the consoling thought that Chandler couldn't pitch every day. Geisel, however, is just about through as an arbiter.

In Chicago one day in 1942, Geisel was standing just off third base when the batter lifted a foul ball outside the bag. Spud chased over after it. Completely oblivious of everything except the necessity of catching the ball, he crashed into the umpire without even seeing him. Both fell to the ground. Chandler picked himself up; but Geisel was carried off the field and sent to the hospital with injuries that spelled an end to his lengthy service as an umpire.

Chandler's intensity in whatever he does has been with him all his life. He worked hard as a farm boy. He worked hard and excelled as an all-around athlete at the University of Georgia, from which he was graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1932. He worked hard the years he played in the minors. He worked hard to make good with the Yankees, and after he had won his right to a permanent locker in the New York clubhouse, he was still working hard to stay there.

After Spud had pitched two shutouts in his first New York starting appearances in May, 1937, he gave the Gotham scribes a brief history of his life and of the almost Spartan training he had as a youngster, which made him hard as nails.

"I was born September 12, 1909, at Commerce, Georgia, a Yankee on my dad's side and a Virginian on my mother's," he said. "Until I was seventeen I worked on our farm at Carnesville, to which we moved when I was eight. That meant cotton, corn, small grain, and plenty of work for all hands.

"During my first two years in college, I led an advertising crew out of Atlanta in the summer season—fifteen miles of walking each day giving out handbills.

"For two summers I worked with a concrete-mixing gang on road construction. Never a let-up, with my face always turned toward the Promised Land.

"I knew I could pitch, but I had to get someone to believe in me. Looks as though I had found my man in Manager Joe McCarthy."

Chandler's early environment at Carnesville may have played no small part in inducing the youngster to set his heart on major-league baseball. The town is only a long fly away from the home

of one of baseball's greatest stars in history, Ty Cobb. The Georgia Peach was a hero to practically every kid in Georgia, and young Chandler was no exception.

Over his years in baseball, Chandler has had many thrills, but none stands out in his memory more than one which he experienced back in his days at Carnesville.

"I was only fourteen at the time," he recalls, "and I was pitching and playing the outfield for the town high school nine. One day we had a game scheduled with the team in neighboring Royston, and Ty Cobb was in the stands.

"I was a fairly good hitter when I was a kid," he admits, "because the heavy work on the farm had developed my muscles. I was confident of making a good showing before Cobb, because in the ten previous games I had been so lucky as to hit seven home runs.

"Well, it was the usual story, I presume. I tried too hard. I almost broke my back up there at the plate, but I couldn't buy a hit. The best I could do was a long foul. Disappointed as I was at not getting a safety, it was still enough for me to have played before the great Cobb. The thrill will stay with me as long as I live."

All Chandler's athletic endeavors were not

confined to baseball, however. In spite of his father's serious objections he also played high school football.

"Dad didn't really mind football," Chandler declares. "It was just that he was afraid I would get hurt; and he didn't like it because I got home from practice so late that I had to do my farm chores in the dark.

"Everything would have turned out all right at that," Spud says, "if I hadn't got hurt. In one game during my sophomore year an opposing player stepped on my left hand with his cleats and smashed it so badly that I couldn't use it for three weeks. Dad really hit the roof then.

"'No more football, or no college,' was his ultimatum," Chandler relates, "and I thought I was sunk. Finally, however, I made a bargain with him. If he would let me continue to play football in high school, I would pay my own way through college. I was taking a big chance, but I thought possibly I could get a scholarship."

That was one of the best bargains Chandler ever made, and today his father is quickest to agree.

Originally Spud planned to go to Clemson, for he had been offered a scholarship by Josh Cody, then coach of the Tigers. Before he left for Clemson, though, he was offered financial help, should

he need it, if he would change his mind and go to the University of Georgia. The man who offered this aid was Lawrence Costa of Athens, an intense follower of Georgia football, and a man whom Chandler remembers with gratitude.

Chandler never made use of Costa's offer, for he so impressed Coach Harry Mehre of the Bulldog varsity by his play as a freshman halfback that he was given an athletic scholarship almost as a Christmas present.

Chandler was as big a success in collegiate football as he later became in professional baseball. As a triple-threat star, he became an All-Southern back. He was unexcelled as a punter, and as a passer he could lay the ball on a dime.

He was a member of Georgia teams that met and defeated Yale three years running, with Spud scoring a touchdown each year. And fans who saw that memorable game between Georgia and N. Y. U. are still talking about the punt he made from behind his own goal line. The ball traveled nearly the length of the field, pulled the Bulldogs out of a hole, and helped the Georgians to protect a 7-6 victory.

In college Chandler was an all-around athlete just as he had been in high school, although it was only natural that his prowess as a football star

should have received the bigger press notices. He also played baseball and basketball, and in track he held the Southeastern Conference hurdles championship.

On the diamond he managed to win eight or nine games a season while losing merely one or two. During the summer months between his sophomore and junior years Chandler pitched his only no-hit, no-run game. He was hurling for the Tuccoa outfit, a semipro team, against Newry, South Carolina, and for the nine innings he twirled perfect baseball.

It was while he was a college pitcher that the Yankees became interested in him. He was spotted by Scout Johnny Nee and looked over by none other than George Weiss, head of the famed Yankee farm system. Weiss made a special trip to Georgia to see for himself if Chandler had the stuff out of which Yankee stars are made.

The Yankee farm boss did not grab Chandler right away, but he was impressed by the possibilities in the kid. Calling Nee to him after Chandler had won one of his college games, Weiss said:

“Johnny, I think maybe the boy will turn out all right, but I want to make sure. Keep an eye on him and let me know how he does.”

Nee kept Weiss so well informed that after a couple of years Weiss signed Chandler to a Yankee contract.

Secretly Weiss had a few misgivings about taking on a former football player, for experience had proved that grid heroes often turn up with old gridiron injuries which hamper their effectiveness as major-league pitchers.

"As it turned out," Spud declared, "I came up with a sore shoulder in my throwing arm in 1937, but it had nothing to do with football. I hurt my arm when I went to field a bunt. I picked up the ball and was all set to throw to first, when everybody began yelling for me to throw to second to catch the runner who was trying to move up on the sacrifice. I swung around quickly; and as I threw, I felt a sharp pain shoot through my right shoulder. I was off balance, that's all."

The injury sent Chandler back to Newark. Despite his explanation, there were those who nodded their heads sagely over "the same old story, football injuries cropping up again."

Then in 1938 with the Yankees, Chandler felt a new pain, this time in the elbow. He finished the season, winning fourteen games and losing only five, but he had to massage that elbow before every mound appearance.

"After the game," he said, "my whole arm would be so sore that I couldn't tie my tie in the locker room or raise a fork to my mouth at dinner."

Following the season, he was operated upon by Dr. Robert E. Walsh, the New York club's physician, for bone splinters on the elbow.

"Football injuries again," said the wise-boys in the grandstands.

And finally, in 1939, while the New Yorkers were training at St. Petersburg, Spud happened to break his ankle.

The story came out that Chandler had been over at the University of Georgia, jogging around the cinder track, and had stepped into a hole and snapped his ankle bone. To make the story better, there were supposed to have been some football players also working out on the track in spring training. This gave the critical boys a chance to bring up the old charge again.

"Once a football player, always daffy," they smirked. "What in Sam Hill was a baseball player doing on a cinder track with a football team, anyway? He ought to have known better."

All of which makes Chandler indignant.

"I never hurt a shoulder or a knee on the gridiron," he insists.

He has little patience with anyone who tries to

blame football for his various physical misfortunes.

Following college, Chandler's best asset—outside of his natural sinker ball and his flaming competitive spirit—was his time-table. For five full summers he caught trains to various minor-league cities, and he was never longer than two years with any one team. His record was hardly anything more than a line in the Baseball Guide. By the time 1937 rolled around, he was tired enough almost to quit his search for major-league gold and glory.

He might never have been heard from again five miles outside of Georgia, if an owner of a semipro team there had offered him enough money to pitch for his outfit.

Chandler was fed up with making the rounds of the Yankee farm system, so he went to John Allen, a wealthy shoe manufacturer who operated a team known as the Shoemakers.

"Mr. Allen," he said, "I'd like to pitch for your team. What can you offer?"

"Come back in two weeks, Spurge," Allen answered, "and I'll let you know."

Chandler read the contract Allen offered, then shook his head.

"Not enough," he declared. He took his glove and spikes and went back to the Yankees.

Just for the record, here is Spud's itinerary and what he did in the five years before he settled down in New York:

He started off with the Springfield club of the Eastern League for part of 1932, winning four games and losing none. He finished the season with Binghamton in the New York-Pennsylvania League, where he won eight and lost one. In 1933 he started with Binghamton again, winning ten and losing eight, and then went up to Newark in the International League—just one grade below the Yankees—winning one and losing four.

The next season, 1934, saw him playing for three teams. With Newark and Syracuse he won two games, lost four, and with Minneapolis of the American Association he appeared in six games without winning or losing a game.

In 1935 he went out to the Pacific Coast League, and for Oakland and Portland he recorded seven wins, nine losses. The following year he came back to Newark, winning fourteen and losing thirteen of the thirty-five games he worked in.

It was in the spring of the next year, 1937, that Chandler almost gave up the ghost. Fortunately, however, he refused Allen's offer and went to St. Petersburg for spring training with the Yankees.

He worked harder than ever and sought advice

from veterans, coaches, and from anyone who he thought might help him. McCarthy was impressed, and Chandler found himself in a Yankee uniform at last when the regular season rolled around in the month of April.

But merely because he had his uniform, all was not serene for the curly-haired newcomer. He had to battle to keep his berth with the world champions, who were always looking for new talent, but who at the same time were exceedingly well-stocked from their productive farm chain.

Chandler was kept waiting for action nearly a month by Manager McCarthy, who finally called him in from the bull pen against the Tigers in Detroit on May 6, 1937.

"I remember that debut only too well," Chandler put in with a wry grin. "Even their pitcher, Tommy Bridges, got to me for a two-bagger. That wasn't so good."

Three days later, in Chicago, McCarthy needed a starting pitcher, for Johnny Broaca had a sore shoulder, and Johnny Murphy had been shelled from the box in his last effort. Manager Joe played a hunch and sent the Georgian to the mound in the first inning.

Chandler responded with a brilliant game, giving up only five hits and allowing just one earned

run. Meanwhile, however, Thornton Lee of the White Sox was handcuffing the Yankees; and Spud finally lost the game 2-1.

On May 18, Chandler was given his second starting assignment, and this time he won his spurs. He turned the tables on the White Sox at Yankee Stadium, blanking them 4-0 with six hits. His following game was a 14-0 shutout over Cleveland, and the New York press began to sit up and take notice of this newcomer from the South. In his first three starts Chandler gave up only seventeen hits in twenty-seven innings and allowed merely one earned run. In addition he chalked up an even dozen strike-outs.

Spud went on to notch seven victories as against four defeats with the Yankees, only to come up with his sore arm when he changed his mind about throwing to first and threw to second after fielding the sacrifice bunt.

Sent back to Newark in August (the Yankees replaced him with Ivy Paul Andrews, whom they got from Cleveland for the waiver price of \$7,500) Chandler did little work. He appeared in only four ball games, winning one and losing two, although he did manage to win two Little World Series games against Columbus.

In 1938 Chandler was back with the Yankees,

only to find that the long layoff during the winter had done his salary arm little good.

"I could pitch fairly well that season," Chandler recalled, "but I still got a twinge every time I threw the ball. I realized that an operation was probably due, but I hoped I could get through the summer."

Spud nearly finished the season, pitching in twenty-three games and compiling the excellent winning percentage of .737 on fourteen victories and five defeats. In addition he led all American League pitchers with a perfect fielding record for the most chances accepted.

During the season he gained revenge on Thorny Lee, beating him 1-0 and winning his own game with a terrific home-run clout. He also pitched the longest game of the year, sore arm and all, beating Chicago in fifteen innings during which he gave up only eight hits.

On September 11, however, his arm really went bad, and Spud was unable to take part in the World Series. That fall, following the Series of 1938, Dr. Walsh performed the operation to remove the bone splinters from Spud's elbow.

Then came the season that he broke his ankle, and the injury gave Spud a serious setback. He did not pitch until July 30, and during the rest of

the season he could garner only three victories. He was not beaten that year, but eight times he failed to finish his game.

In 1940 Chandler was used sparingly, winning eight and losing seven. In 1941 he discovered from Ruffing how to throw his slider; and then the boy from the Georgia farm country was on his way to the top. He won ten and lost four that year; increased that to sixteen and five in 1942; and then hit the jackpot with his twenty victories and four defeats plus his earned-run average of 1.67 in 1943. He climaxed this rich season with two World Series victories in the annual fall classic.

The fact that Chandler's earned-run average was so low—the best since Walter Johnson posted an ERA of 1.49 in 1919—plus the fact that he also had the highest winning percentage in the American League, .833, contributed heavily to his being voted the league's Most Valuable Player. But he performed other notable achievements that season of 1943, and any one of them would be a story in itself.

On April 24 he turned in a one-hit job on the Senators at the Stadium, the closest he has ever come to a no-hitter in the majors. Washington's only safety was a first-inning double inside the left field foul line by Ellis Clary, the Senator's rookie

third baseman and lead-off batter. Chandler had seven strike-outs, including four in a row on Stan Spence, the Nats' slugging center fielder. He was named by the Baseball Writers' Association of America as pitcher for the *Sporting News* All-Star major-league team of 1943. And he set a World Series record when he gave the Cardinals 10 hits in the fifth game last fall and yet still shut them out.

In the spring of 1944, Chandler lost a month of training because of calls from his draft board and because of the physical examination he took the latter part of February. He did manage to pitch in one 1944 game, McCarthy giving him the honor of opening the Yankees' home season in Yankee Stadium.

Chandler did a creditable job and appeared set for a winning summer, for he went six innings, giving up six hits and being lifted for a pinch hitter when the Yanks were behind 1-3. The New Yorkers went on to win the game, but Chandler did not get credit for the victory. He was sworn into the United States Army, April 28, at Fort McPherson, Georgia.

Spud was his manager's pitcher, but he was not too popular a mound choice with his teammates.

"Spud's delivery had a peculiar effect on the ball

and made fielding difficult," explained Shortstop Frankie Crosetti. "After the batter hit his pitch, the ball acquired a strange, treacherous backspin; and grounders that I thought I was going to gobble up suddenly spurted out of my glove."

For that reason Spud's job was made more difficult. The Yanks, the records prove, made more errors in the infield behind him than they did behind any of their other pitchers.

In the long history of the American League's Most Valuable Player awards, Chandler is only the second pitcher to make the grade. Walter Johnson was the other, and he was chosen twice. Chandler was the ninth Yankee to be selected, and the third in succession, following Joe Di Maggio in 1941 and Joe Gordon in 1942.

Despite the fact that his delivery made it harder for them on the field, Chandler was personally really popular with his teammates. They knew that on the mound Spud was giving his all with every pitch. He not only concentrated on what to throw the batter, but he was thinking ahead as to what he would do with the ball if it were hit to him.

In the clubhouse he was quiet, preferring to watch and listen to the antics and quips of such well-known pranksters as Lefty Gomez, Pat Ma-

lone, and Jake Powell, rather than to indulge in them himself. He came in for a bit of ribbing from the boys, however, for his southern drawl and Deep South background. Bump Hadley could always get a rise out of Chandler by singing "Marching Through Georgia," and any reference to rebels of the Civil War aroused Spud's dander.

Chandler is the intelligent type and likes to argue. He is set in his opinions and will hold forth all night unless he is definitely proven wrong.

He likes bird dogs and hunting. During the baseball season he paired up with Swampy Donald at bridge and challenged any other twosome on the club.

Chandler is married to the former Frances Willard, one of the prettiest of the major-league baseball wives. He met her when both were patients at St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Brighton, Mass., in 1938, the time he had the bone splinters removed from his elbow. They were married October 19, 1939, and have a young son, Frankie.

Chandler is sorry the nickname "Spud" was tacked to him, for he much prefers "Spurge." He realizes, though, that there is not much he can do about it now. He is also sorry that his middle name, Ferdinand, has leaked out. For years he had kept it secret, and then one day there it was in

print. There was nothing he could do about that, either.

The Yankee ace is serious now about his career in the Army, but as he always did when he was on the mound for McCarthy, he is looking ahead to the day when once again he will don a New York uniform. That was apparent the day down at Camp Shelby in Mississippi when he was awarded the Most Valuable Player trophy.

In an interview broadcast as part of the ceremony, he declared, "I'm good for at least two more years of big-league baseball. I'm not younger, but I'm smarter. Although it will take me a little time to get my arm back in shape after this Army layoff, I'm really in better physical condition as a result of my training than I have ever been in my life."

His determination to come back to the Yankees is as strong as his earlier determination to make the big leagues when he stood in the Stadium as a college football player. Being such a conclusive, determined fellow, he will probably get what he wants, but next time he will find things a bit different. There will be a place all ready for him—his for the asking.

Manager McCarthy is counting on it, for even though Spurge Chandler is a Southerner, he is still a "Yankee" in every sense of the word.

SPUD CHANDLER

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SPURGEON FERDINAND CHANDLER

Born September 12, 1909, at Commerce, Ga. Height, 6.00.

Weight, 180. Throws and bats right-handed.

Entered United States Army, April 28, 1944.

yr	Club	League	G	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg
32	Springfield	Eastern	8	47	4	0	1.000	53	...	...	20	19	...
32	Binghamton	NYP	15	98	8	1	.889	103	38	30	34	34	2.71
33	Binghamton	NYP	25	149	10	8	.556	166	82	70	46	51	4.23
33	Newark	Int.	7	42	1	4	.200	47	21	18	10	16	3.84
34	Newark-Syracuse	Int.	17	46	2	4	.333	55	34	32	19	27	6.24
34	Minneapolis	A.A.	6	16	0	0	.000	26	16	14	2	11	7.84
35	Oakland-Portland	P.C.	34	179	7	9	.438	203	110	85	82	51	4.21
36	Newark	Int.	35	219	14	13	.519	231	99	81	81	72	3.33
37	Newark	Int.	4	20	1	2	.333	20	11	9	5	7	4.05
37	New York	Amer.	12	82	7	4	.636	79	31	26	31	20	2.83
38	New York	Amer.	23	172	14	5	.737	183	86	77	36	47	4.03
39	New York*	Amer.	11	19	3	0	1.000	26	7	6	4	9	2.84
40	New York	Amer.	27	172	8	7	.533	184	100	88	56	60	4.60
41	New York	Amer.	28	164	10	4	.714	146	68	58	60	60	3.18
42	New York	Amer.	24	201	16	5	.762	176	64	53	74	74	2.37
43	New York	Amer.	30	253	20	4	.833	197	62	46	134	54	1.64
44	New York	Amer.	1	6	0	0	.000	6	3	3	1	1	...

Major League Totals 156 1063 78 29 .729 997 421 357 396 325 3.00

* Fractured ankle in February, 1939, and did not pitch until July 30.

WORLD SERIES RECORD

yr	Club	League	G	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg
41	New York	Amer.	1	5	0	1	.000	4	3	2	2	2	3.60
42	New York	Amer.	2	8½	0	1	.000	5	1	1	3	1	1.08
43	New York	Amer.	2	18	2	0	1.000	17	2	1	10	3	0.50

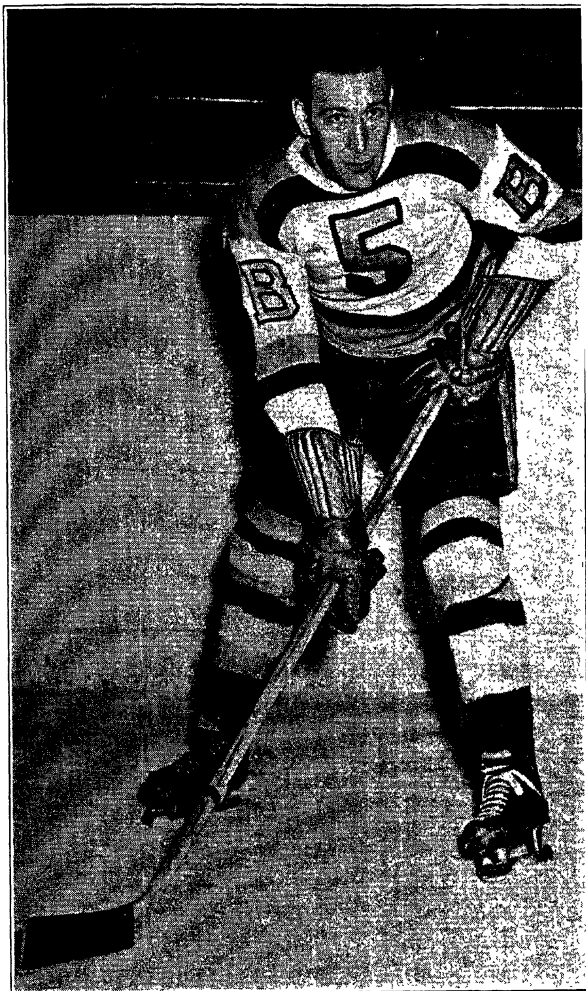
World Series Totals 5 31½ 2 2 .500 26 6 4 15 6 1.15

ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

yr	League	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg
42	American	4	1	0	1.000	2	0	0	2	0	0.00

AUBREY VICTOR (DIT) CLAPPER

“Veteran Defenseman of the Boston Bruins”



AUBREY VICTOR (DIT) CLAPPER

CHAPTER IV

AUBREY VICTOR (DIT) CLAPPER
"VETERAN DEFENSEMAN OF THE BOSTON BRUINS"

A TALL, well-built, but slightly bashful kid of twenty walked into the dressing room of the Boston Bruins in the fall of 1927, and said simply:

"I'm Dit Clapper. Where do you want me to sit?"

"Right over there, son," answered Trainer Win Green, giving him a careful glance.

The big fellow found his place, sat down, and began dressing for the first time as a major-league hockey player.

What neither Clapper himself, nor Green, nor anyone else connected with the team realized was that Clapper was to hold down that same seat from that time on—for eighteen years!

As he entered the National Hockey League for the season of 1944-45, Aubrey Victor Clapper established a new record of eighteen years of play in the league, surpassing the seventeen-year mark made by the great Reginald (Hooley) Smith.

More than that, Clapper has seen all his service with that one club, the Bruins, while Smith spread his talents over four.

Clapper came up to the Bruins after only one season of minor-league experience with the Boston Tigers, and it did not take him long to reach stardom. He became the devastating right wing on Boston's famous Dynamite Line, with Dutch Gainor at left wing and Ralph (Cooney) Weiland at center. Clapper played on three world's championship Stanley Cup teams. He became playing coach and assistant manager of the Bruins. And he assured himself of a place in history as one of the most popular players of all time.

Like most other hockey players, Clapper comes from Canada, having been born February 9, 1907, in Newmarket, Ontario. His inclusion, therefore, in this series of books on famous "American" athletes might be considered strange. Yet Dit, although a Canadian by birth, has become an adopted son of the United States, and in Boston especially he is looked upon as a loyal citizen.

Clapper is a big man, standing six feet, two inches and weighing an even two hundred pounds. Encase this frame in a suit of hockey armor; place it on flashing steel runners; put a five-foot hockey stick in its hand: and you have a tremendous asset

for the fastest game in the world. So the Bruins found out.

In appearance Dit can be called handsome. He has coal-black hair, which he parts and combs straight back. His eyes are blue and his smile is quick. His wit is ready. More than once he has relieved tension in the dressing room by a well-turned quip.

Clapper's closest pal in hockey is his roommate, Bill Cowley. It isn't enough that they live together in Boston on Bay State Road. They even dress side by side in the Bruins' room, and their corner is usually the first that reporters head for.

Odd as it may seem, it was Cowley who gave Clapper his biggest disappointment in hockey. However, you would have to know big Dit really well to realize that he was disappointed. It happened after the Bruins had won the Stanley Cup for the third time in 1941.

A small, select group of hockey writers, Bruins officials, and team members were meeting for dinner at the Copley Plaza Hotel in Boston to celebrate the championship. A specially invited guest was the late Frank Calder, National Hockey League president, who had come down from Montreal for the express purpose of presenting the Hart Trophy to one of the Bruins.

The Hart Trophy is considered hockey's highest honor. It is awarded annually by a vote of hockey writers in all major-league cities to the player considered most valuable to his club during the season. Recipients since the trophy was inaugurated in 1924 by Dr. David A. Hart have included most of the brightest lights of the game—Frank Nighbor, Billy Burch, Nels Stewart, Herb Gardiner, Howie Morenz, Roy Worters, Eddie Shore, Aurel Joliat, Babe Siebert, Toe Blake, and Ebbie Goodfellow all having won it.

Each year the name of the winner is a closely guarded secret. Calder's appearance at the banquet revealed only that some member of the Bruins would get the award, and the spacious dining hall was alive with conjecture.

"It must be Clapper," said one of the writers. "After all, he's been in the league for fourteen years."

"He was the backbone of the team's defense," added another. His inspirational value was enormous in leading the team to winning the world's championship."

And so the conversation went. Naturally Clapper could not help but overhear some of the remarks, and his hopes began to rise.

The rest of the story is in the now-it-can-be-told

category, but probably the sequence of events will come as a surprise even to Clapper himself:

One of Boston's veteran hockey reporters had covered the game ever since it was introduced in the Hub in the season of 1924-25. Over the years he had become one of Clapper's most intimate friends among the writing fraternity. At that banquet he did not like the way things were progressing. Intuitively he felt that a snowball was being rolled up which could melt into an awful let-down for Dit.

Taking the bit in his teeth and daring to break precedent, this writer went directly to Mr. Frank Calder.

"Frank," he began, "I know it's against tradition, but I'm going to ask you a favor. Did Clapper win the Hart Trophy, or didn't he? If he did, I won't say a word about it to anyone. But if he didn't, I want to be able to tell him now, so that he won't be numbed out of his senses when you announce somebody else."

Calder pondered the issues a moment, then declared:

"I think you are right, so I'll tell you. Clapper did not win the trophy. It is going to Bill Cowley."

The reporter called Dit to one side.

"I don't know quite how to tell you this," he

began, "but I thought it would be better if you knew now rather than later."

"Yes?" asked Clapper, raising his eyebrows a little.

"Well, Cowley is getting the Hart Trophy."

For a minute Clapper did not say a word. Within him disappointment at missing out on the award mingled with his deep loyalty to Cowley. Finally he said:

"Thanks for telling me. After all, Cowley really deserves it."

Clapper's attitude in that one instance, an instance that has remained unknown in the sports world until today, has been typical of his whole career. It is things like that which made his place secure in the hearts of Boston fans.

Dit's path through hockey has not been altogether serene. In late years it was Cowley who won most of the headlines, repeating to the Hart Trophy in 1943. Before that it was Eddie Shore, who won the award four years out of six in the middle 1930's. And then, over the years, there were Tiny Thompson and the Kraut Line of Porky Dumart, Milt Schmidt, and Bobby Bauer, and the Bruins' famous goalie, Frankie Brimsek.

Through it all Clapper continued to flash his way down the ice, first as a right-winger, and then

as an all-star defenseman. Opposing players had a healthy respect for him, but it was on account of his ability, not on account of his viciousness, for Dit was never a mean player. Possibly he might have been greater had he been meaner, but such qualities were not in his make-up.

“What’s the sense of high-sticking or butt-ending or being just plain dirty?” has been his philosophy. “Let’s play hockey.”

When aroused, however, Clapper was no one to tangle with. He would take a lot himself, but when goaded too much he put plenty of excitement into the evening. He would take much more himself without retaliating than he would if some other, smaller member of the Bruins was getting a going-over.

Followers of the Boston club could always tell when Clapper was about to blow off. The back of his neck turned brick red.

That Clapper has been able to continue in hockey and set a new record for playing longevity has been considered one of the miracles of the game, for on the night of January 30, 1942, he received an injury that might easily have spelled the end of his playing days.

It happened in Toronto, where the Bruins and Maple Leafs were trying to dissolve a two-all tie

late in the third period. A huge crowd of 13,000 fans was crowding spacious Maple Leaf Gardens, and the roars alternately rose and fell with the tide of the play.

Both teams were keeping up the pressure. On a typical power rush, big Bingo Kampman, burly Toronto defenseman, wound up behind his own net and set sail for the Boston zone. He picked up speed as he crossed his own blue line, flew through center ice, and bore down on the Bruins' defense.

Clapper covered the play beautifully, forcing Bingo to swing wide to the dasher. The two crashed together in the corner and fell to the ice. Kampman got up and skated away. Dit remained on the ice.

"I remember my leg felt numb," he recalled afterwards, "but I didn't see why I couldn't at least get up."

Trainer Green rushed out onto the ice, took one look at Clapper's leg, and ordered him carried to the dressing room. Blood was spilling out over his shoetop, coloring the ice, and dripping from his skate. Supported by two of his teammates he was helped from the arena. The Achilles tendon on his left leg had been severed by Kampman's skate, and the muscle behind it had been two-thirds cut through.

No one was aware then of the seriousness of the injury, least of all Clapper. Kampman did not know what the trouble was. It had been only a routine collision for him, one that occurs many times in every hockey game.

As it was, however, Clapper was hospitalized for a month and sidelined for the rest of the season. That he ever could walk again naturally, let alone play hockey, was astounding.

Dit today has a neat hemstitching job to exhibit on that left leg of his. No less than eighty-five stitches were taken—more than most hockey players receive in a lifetime. In operating, the surgeons had to open up the leg and probe for the tendon, which had snapped up into the calf. When they had located the upper part of the tendon, they had to force it down, secure it to its lower part, and then hope for the best.

For a while Clapper had to wear a built-up heel, and he favored the foot in walking. Now he is back in normal shoes and has no trace of a limp. Only on cold days does the ankle trouble him, and then a little exercise straightens it out.

Ask Clapper today how it happened, and he will give you the hockey player's stock answer: "Aw, I got hit with a program."

That is what he said on the night when it had

happened, as he was being taken from the Bruins' dressing room to the hospital on a stretcher. Some Toronto fans that evening gained added respect for the fortitude of one Mr. Clapper.

When Dit first came to Boston to play with the Tigers, he was just a quiet boy from north of the border whose real name was Aubrey. How he got the label of "Dit" remains something of a mystery, for not even Clapper can recall how it began. Research has disclosed that the nickname was started by a Boston newspaperman, but why is a secret that will probably remain locked with the ages.

Although Clapper was born in Newmarket, he really calls Hastings, Ontario, his home, for he went there with his family when he was only six months old and has lived there ever since. To Hastings he took his wife, the former Lorraine Pratt of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and at Hastings he is raising his two children, Donald, aged eleven, and Marilyn, aged six. His wife was the daughter of a lumberman with extensive interests in Vancouver, British Columbia. Dit met her in Vancouver when he was on a trip West with the Bruins in 1930. They were married in 1931.

Dit laid the foundation for his future career like other Canadian boys. He began by playing

shinny on the ice of the Trent River near Hastings, and then, when he was older, he joined in pickup games on rinks in the town. He eventually played with Oshawa Juniors and a couple of years with the Hastings team before finally joining his last amateur club, the Parkdale Canoe Club of Toronto, in the 1925-26 season.

It may seem a bit peculiar for a hockey player to come from a canoe club, but as Clapper says, "It would be pretty hard to go canoeing in the winter. The boys just exchanged their paddles for hockey sticks and made the water hard."

That year Parkdale was coached by Harry Watson, one of the greatest right-wingers in amateur hockey history. Under his tutelage Clapper blossomed to the point where he came to the notice of Eddie Powers, coach of the Boston Tigers. From the moment Powers saw him, Clapper became Eddie's boy, and the friendship was broken only by Powers' death in 1942.

Powers brought Clapper to Boston in the fall of 1926 and paired him with Ag Smith at defense. Ag later became a linesman in the National Hockey League. Clapper needed only one season to convince Manager Art Ross of the Bruins that he belonged in major-league company, and Dit has been up ever since.

Clapper's first season, 1927-28, saw the Bruins with a veteran defense quartet, so that there was no place behind the blue line for Dit.

"I couldn't break into a group composed of Eddie Shore, Sprague Cleghorn, and Lionel Hitchman," Dit declared, "so Ross put me at right wing. Once in a while, though, I was used briefly at defense with Shore."

In his initial campaign as a major-leaguer Clapper was finding himself. The second year, Ross brought Cooney Weiland to Boston along with Tiny Thompson and laid the foundation for the Stanley Cup outfit of 1928-29. That was the season the Dynamite Line of Gainor, Weiland, and Clapper was formed, and Dit came up with nine goals and two assists for eleven points.

In 1929-30, however, the line really went to town and spearheaded a Boston attack which set a record for total goals in one season. This record was surpassed only in the war year of 1943-44. The Bruins of '29-'30 scored 179 goals in forty-four games, a mark which stood until Montreal Canadiens scored 234 fourteen years later. Canadiens, incidentally, was not the only team to surpass the record, for Bruins came up with 223 goals, and Detroit Red Wings and Toronto Maple Leafs each scored 214. These four teams, however,

played six more games during the winter than the Bruins of 1929-30.

Just for the record: Weiland scored forty-three goals and had thirty assists for seventy-three points; Clapper shot forty-one goals and earned twenty assists for sixty-one points; and Gainor had eighteen goals and thirty-one assists for forty-nine points. The Dynamiters scored 102 goals—still the high for one line in a single season—and were credited with 81 assists for a total of 183 points. Quite a record!

No other line in hockey has matched the Dynamiters' tremendous outpouring of 102 goals in a single season, and more than a few mighty good waves have had a shot at it. That 1929-30 season marked Clapper's high, both in total goals and in total points.

Dit is a member of hockey's exclusive 200-goal club, composed of those players who have scored that number of tallies in regular season play. Besides Dit, the list includes only the leader, Nels Stewart at 323 goals, Bill Cook, Charlie Conacher, Harvey Jackson, Howie Morenz, Aurel Joliat, Syd Howe, Cy Denneny, Babe Dye, and Hooley Smith.

Clapper's 200th goal remains one of his biggest thrills in hockey.

It came in Toronto the night of January 18,

1940. With only two minutes to go in the game, Clapper picked up a smooth pass from Cowley to score the only goal of the game. Cowley and Toronto, incidentally, have had more than a little to do with Clapper's hockey history throughout the past years.

"I got a tremendous kick out of that goal," Dit said later. "I had been wanting to reach the 200-mark ever since the start of the season; and then finally it happened. I still have the puck."

After Clapper scored, play was stopped, and the puck was formally presented to the big defenseman. Later the rubber disc was mounted in silver, inscribed with details of the game. Today it is an important adornment on the mantelpiece of the Clapper home.

Another goal also stands out in Dit's memory. That came in his very first game as a Bruin. He tallied the only marker for Boston as the Rossmen tied Chicago Black Hawks 1-1 at Boston Arena the night of Nov. 15, 1927.

Of the three Stanley Cup outfits on which he has played, Clapper believes the 1938-39 team to have been the best.

"As a matter of fact, I think that was the greatest team we ever had in Boston," he declares.

That was the outfit spearheaded by the famous

Kraut Line of Woody (Porky) Dumart, Milt Schmidt, and Bobby Bauer, three of the finest men and best hockey players in the business. Inseparable pals both on and off the ice, they marched off in a body to join the Royal Canadian Air Force in January of 1942, and all of them later saw service overseas.

On the starting defense were Eddie Shore, one of the greatest hockey stars of all time, and huge Jack Portland. In goal was none other than Frankie Brimsek, the Czechoslovakian kid from Minnesota who stepped into Tiny Thompson's skates when Tiny was sold to Detroit Red Wings. Frankie promptly ran up such a string of shutouts that he became known as "Mr. Zero."

The Bruins that season of 1938-39 had a second line composed of the wily Cowley at center, Roy Conacher, youngest of the great Conacher family, at left wing, and Mel "Sudden Death" Hill at right wing. Hill earned his sobriquet during the Stanley Cup play-off with New York Rangers that spring, when he won three games with overtime tallies.

For a third line, Manager Art Ross could call on Ray Getliffe, Gordie Pettinger, and Charley Sands. Cooney Weiland was a spare forward, and Bill (Flash) Hollett could fill in either as a forward

or at defense. The alternate blue line duo was formed of Clapper and the very capable Johnny Crawford.

That is the make-up of the team which Clapper says is the best Boston has ever had in its two decades in the National Hockey League; and it is the team which gave Clapper his greatest thrill in the game.

"It was not only fun to play on such a team," Dit declared, "but that spring we took part in what was to me one of the toughest, most rugged, and most thrilling play-off series in history. I refer to that opening play-down with the Rangers which went the limit of seven games. I don't think I would ever want to play in another like it, but looking back on it now is satisfying."

Bruins had won the regular season championship and were called upon to meet the Rangers in the first round of the play-offs. Rangers had finished second with a truly great club, Manager Lester Patrick having gathered together a young group of fast-skating, sharpshooting players whose biggest asset was their teamwork.

That year Rangers had such forwards as Bryan Hextall, Phil Watson, Dutch Hiller, the two Colvilles, Mac and Neil, Alex Shibicky, Lynn Patrick, Clint Smith, and George Allen. Their defense-

men included Ott Heller, Babe Pratt, Muzz Patrick, and Art Coulter. In the nets was Davey Kerr, who unfortunately hurt his shoulder in the opening contest. He had to give way to Bert Gardiner, who was brought up from the Philadelphia Ramblers in the International-American League, and who almost turned the tide of victory to the New Yorkers.

“We played the first game in Madison Square Garden,” Clapper recalled, “and the opening period was a foretaste of what was to come. Rangers began right off handing out stiff body checks, especially against Conacher, Hill, and Cowley, and they played careful hockey. New York scored first in the second period, when Shibicky connected on passes from Pratt and Neil Colville, and then Cowley tied it up in the third period.”

Clapper neglected to mention that he helped on this play. Cowley had fed Conacher a pass, and Roy's shot boomed off the backboards to Clapper. Dit immediately shot the puck over to Cowley, who slapped it past Kerr.

With the score one-all, the game went into overtime, the first team to register a goal to be the winner. The boys struggled through the first overtime of twenty minutes, and then through a second. In the third session Hillie came through,

and that he did was due to a bit of master-minding by Manager Ross.

Roy Conacher, only a freshman that season, had led the league in goals with 26, and Rangers had effectively bottled him up. They knew that Cowley made most of his passes to Roy, and Mac Colville's special job was to cover young Conacher. Whenever Roy neared the defense, he was tied up in knots.

"Make more passes to Hill," ordered Ross between the first and second periods, when he saw how things stood, and the strategy paid off. Cowley finally slipped a perfect pass to Hill, and Hill made it good.

Mel's goal came at 19:25 of the third overtime. While it ended a stretch of more than fifty-nine minutes of extra play for the two teams, it did not approach the National League all-time record of 116 minutes and thirty seconds of overtime set in a play-off game between Detroit and Montreal Maroons at Montreal, March 24, 1936. Yet it left the huge crowd of 14,886 patrons limp as a rag in Madison Square Garden, and when the game was over the clock showed 1:05 a.m.

The scene of operations then shifted to Boston Garden. Here Cowley and Hill staged a repetition of their New York act.

Bruins had opened up a 2-0 lead in the first period, only to see that seeming superadvantage wiped out by Ranger aggressiveness. The game went into overtime; only this time it did not take Cowley and Hill so long to connect. At 8:24 of the first overtime the wily Ottawa center laid a perfect pass on Hill's stick, and once again Mel (a Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, youngster playing his first regular season in the major league) became the hero of the hour.

The Bruins won the third game, also played in Boston, the easy way, outscoring Rangers 4-1, with Schmidt scoring two goals and Pettinger and Cowley one each. The Bruins now led in the series three games to none, and needed only one more victory to enter the final round against Toronto Maple Leafs. They went back to New York a happy, carefree group, fully confident of winding the series up in four straight games.

"We didn't know it," Clapper said, "but we were due for an awful letdown. We got it—but good."

Rangers were desperate and willing to take any chance. They grew even more incensed when Schmidt scored at forty-nine seconds of the first period to send Boston out in front. They began to press hard, and the going began to get heavy.

Finally Portland and Watson tangled at the boards beside the Boston net to touch off an uprising which involved all twelve players on the ice.

“That was the biggest free-for-all I ever saw in a hockey game,” Clapper declared. “I wasn’t on the ice at the time, but I had a ringside seat on the Bruins’ bench.”

Portland and Watson were trying to secure a loose puck. In their excitement they high-sticked each other, and then began to fight. Shore was there after the puck, too, and he and Coulter clashed. That started the real fireworks. In a twinkling the whole rink was a scene of wild disorder, stick-swinging, and punching.

Muzz Patrick, former national amateur boxing champion of Canada, finally became embroiled with Shore, and aided by Coulter, gave Shore the worst beating of his hockey career. Eddie had to leave the rink.

In the dressing room it was found that he had a broken nose, a badly bruised left eye, a cut under the eye, a battered face, and a bump on the top of his head, the result of being struck by a stick. Only his helmet saved him from serious injury.

For that fight, six major penalties were called. When Crawford and Pratt tangled later, two more were called, making the game probably one of the

most heavily penalized in play-off history. With Shore, Portland, and later Crawford banished from the game for five minutes each, Rangers finally wore down the Bruins and won 2-1.

From that victory Rangers got enough of a lift to win the next two games and to tie the series at three games each, forcing a seventh and deciding contest for Boston ice. A frenzied, record crowd, announced at 16,981, jammed the Garden and saw history made.

Once again the teams had to go into overtime, after Getliffe had scored for the Bruins and Muzz Patrick for the Rangers. The teams struggled through the first overtime, and then through a second, as they had done in the first game in New York. Then, in the third overtime, at exactly 8:00 of the period, and at 12:45 a.m. by the clock, Mel Hill won the game with his third extra-session tally, with assists going to Cowley and Conacher.

Never before in hockey history had the same player scored three winning overtime play-off goals in the same series, and it will be a long time before any other player duplicates the feat.

"That was the series to end all series," Clapper declared. "Our final round against Toronto, in which we won four games to one and took the Stanley Cup, was an anticlimax."

Clapper had been terrific at defense throughout the play-offs, as he had been all year. Probably it was his greatest season at the blue line. But for the fact that Toe Blake of Montreal Canadiens led the scorers over the regular season, Clapper might have won the Hart Trophy.

Over the years to the 1944-45 season, Clapper had scored 218 goals and been credited with 229 assists. This made for him a total of 447 points in regular major-league play; and the total is augmented by thirteen goals and nineteen assists for thirty-two points in the play-offs. His grand total read 231 goals and 248 assists for 479 points, which is a lot of puck-handling, no matter how you figure it; and Clapper was still going strong in the 1944-45 season. Interesting to note, Clapper was always a friend of the official scorer. He never once was known to cry for an assist, and if the truth were known, he has given away a flock of points.

"It wasn't I who made that pass," he has said on occasion. "The assist belongs to so-and-so."

And that, as every fan knows, is not the usual occurrence in hockey.

Soon after Dit hurt his leg in 1942 he was named assistant pilot of the Bruins, a post he holds today. At the time it was not thought that Dit would return to hockey, so serious was his injury,

but he came back to spark the draft-ridden Boston club.

"I'll play until the kids come back from war," he said as he laced on his skates the following fall. "When things return to normal this old-timer will retire to the bench."

When he does, hockey will not exactly lose one of its sterling performers, one who is liked in other cities around the circuit as well as he is in Boston, for there will always be a place for Dit Clapper in the game. He was a star on glorious Bruins teams of the past. He was an anchor on their wartime outfits.

"As long as I have anything to do with the team, Clapper has a place on it," says Manager Ross. And he does not smile when he says it.

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AUBREY VICTOR (DIT) CLAPPER

Born February 9, 1907, at Newmarket, Ontario.

Height, 6:02. Weight, 200. Shoots right.

Year	Club	League	Goals	Assists	Points	Pen.
1926-27	Boston(a)	Can.-Am.	..	..	..	..
1927-28	Boston	National	4	1	5	20
1928-29	Boston	National	9	2	11	48
1929-30	Boston	National	41	20	61	48
1930-31	Boston(b)	National	22	8	30	50
1931-32	Boston	National	17	22	39	21
1932-33	Boston	National	14	14	28	42
1933-34	Boston	National	10	12	22	6
1934-35	Boston(c)	National	21	16	37	21
1935-36	Boston	National	12	13	25	14
1936-37	Boston	National	17	8	25	25
1937-38	Boston	National	6	9	15	24
1938-39	Boston(d)	National	13	13	26	22
1939-40	Boston(e)	National	10	18	28	25
1940-41	Boston(e)	National	8	18	26	24
1941-42	Boston	National	3	12	15	31
1942-43	Boston	National	5	18	23	12
1943-44	Boston(f)	National	6	25	31	13
Complete Major League Totals			218	229	447	446

STANLEY CUP PLAY-OFF RECORD

1928-29	Boston	National	1	0	1	0
1929-30	Boston	National	4	2	6	0
1930-31	Boston	National	2	4	6	0
1932-33	Boston	National	1	1	2	2
1934-35	Boston	National	1	0	1	2
1935-36	Boston	National	0	1	1	0
1936-37	Boston	National	2	0	2	5
1937-38	Boston	National	0	0	0	12
1938-39	Boston	National	0	1	1	6
1939-40	Boston	National	0	2	2	2
1940-41	Boston	National	0	5	5	4
1941-42	Boston(g)	National	0	0	0	0
1942-43	Boston	National	2	3	5	9
Complete Play-Off Totals			13	19	32	42

(a) Turned professional in 1925-26 after playing with Parkdale Canoe Club of Toronto; no statistics available; (b and c) Chosen alternate All-Star right wing; (d) Voted All-Star left defenseman; (e) All-Star right defenseman; (f) Second team All-Star defenseman; (g) Did not participate because of leg injury.

THE COOPER BROTHERS
WILLIAM WALKER COOPER
MORTON CECIL COOPER
“The Cardinals’ Great Battery”



CHAPTER V

THE COOPER BROTHERS "THE CARDINALS' GREAT BATTERY"

A CHILL wind swept through Sportsman's Park in St. Louis as the World Series of 1944 drew to a close. A slanting sun cast shadows on the field and the crowd streamed towards the exits.

"All told, it was a pretty good Series," said one spectator as he folded his program and thrust it into his pocket. "In the end, it was the class of the Cardinals which beat the spunk of the Browns."

"Yes," agreed another, "and there were plenty of heroes for both sides. Dennie Galehouse, Blix Donnelly, George McQuinn, Danny Litwhiler, Ray Sanders—"

"You still haven't named my hero," broke in the first fan quickly. "For my money I'll take big Mort Cooper, and if my money holds out, I'll take his brother, Walker, too."

And thereby hangs a tale, a story that reached a stunning climax in that World Series of 1944; but it is a story which really began many years

before in a small country town in Missouri. It is the tale of two brothers who came from a baseball family, who played baseball together as kids, and who finally played baseball together for a world's championship club.

It is the life story of Walker Cooper, the St. Louis Cardinals' big catcher, and of his even bigger brother, Pitcher Morton. It has a fiction-like plot, even to the successful twist at the climax. And it can be told with all stops open.

In a way this chapter will be mainly about Mort, because it is upon him that most of the glare of publicity has fallen. Walker has always been credited with performing a workmanlike job behind the plate, and his hitting has been upper class. But because of his mechanical perfection, he never got the headlines that Mort did. But then, catchers never do. For every receiver you can name, you can rattle off a dozen hurlers.

And so, while Walker was recognized as a great National League catcher, Mort was hailed as a great National League pitcher. At the same time, however, Mort was acquiring a reputation as a pitcher who couldn't beat the American League.

As an indication of how Morton, the pride of manager Billy Southworth, toys with the National League, let's take a look at his record. For the past

three years in a row he has won more than twenty games a season. Over a seven-year stretch he won 103 games and lost only fifty. In 1942 he was his circuit's most valuable player.

But in competition with the junior loop, big Mort always had something happen to him, and generally it was not for the best. Up to the World Series of 1944 he had appeared in three Series games and had won only one. He played in two All-Star games and lost both of them.

"American Leaguers are just his cousins, that's all," was the opinion generally expressed.

Came the Series of 1944. To Mort was given the honor of pitching the opening game against Manager Luke Sewell's surprise choice of Dennie Galehouse for his Browns.

Mort, all six-feet-two and 210 pounds of him, pitched beautifully. He hurled his right-handed slants into Brother Walker's glove and did not allow a hit until the fourth inning. Then Gene Moore singled, and George McQuinn homered to give the Browns two runs. Those were the only hits the Browns got; but they were enough to give them a 2-0 victory and to drive another link in the chain that shackled Mort in his effort to subdue American League batters.

"You can't win if you don't get any runs," was

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Mort's only comment after the game, as he sat disconsolately in the dressing room, his chin cupped in his hand.

The Series went along until the two teams were all tied up after four games. It was Mort's turn to take the mound again. This time he did not fail. This time it was not home runs which spelled his downfall, but home runs which helped him to victory.

"I just had to win that fifth game," Mort said later. "It was getting monotonous to be beaten by American Leaguers."

Fittingly enough, the game was played before the largest crowd of the Series. A roaring swell of 36,568 spectators watched Cooper carve out his triumph and wipe out his past defeats with one grand performance. It was a great day both for Cooper and his countless admirers.

Mort never pitched more brilliantly. In crises he was superb. His 2-0 shutout was the first for the Cardinals in a World Series since Ernie White blanked the Yankees in 1942. When it was over, Cooper had given but seven hits and had struck out an even dozen Browns.

Cooper was threatened in the first, sixth, and eighth innings, but he pulled himself out of trouble each time. The worst of the innings was the

sixth, in which Mort made what was later seen as the crucial play of the game.

Mike Kreevich opened that frame with a single to right field. Gene Moore bunted; but the alert pitching half of the Cooper partnership pounced upon the ball like a cat and with a lightning-fast throw to second forced Kreevich. Then Vern Stephens sent a sharp single to right, and Moore streaked to third. If Cooper had not nailed Kreevich at second on the attempted sacrifice, the Browns would have tied the score at one-all; for Ray Sanders' home run in the sixth was the Cardinals' only marker at this time.

Even so, the Browns had men on first and third with only one out and the leading hitter of the Series, George McQuinn, up at bat. Mort worked carefully on McQuinn; a little too carefully, for after running the count to three and two, he walked the Brownies' first baseman.

The crowd was in a frenzy. Manager Southworth ran out of the dugout to talk to his pitcher. The two stood there for a moment, the crowd wondering whether Mort was due for another early shower in the World Series. The suspense was almost unbearable.

Southworth turned back to the dugout, however, without making a sign to the bull pen; and

Mort got ready to pitch to Al Zarilla, a dangerous right-hander. Al took a called third strike, his bat still on his shoulder. Up came Mark Christman, and Mort gave him the same treatment. Thunderous applause broke out in the stands.

He struck out Floyd Baker in the seventh and Gene Moore in the eighth to set the stage for his climactic performance in the ninth. In that final inning he fanned three pinch hitters in a row—Milt Byrnes, Chet Laabs, and Mike Chartak—to wipe out all the sting of his earlier defeats.

His twelve strike-outs were only one shy of the record set by Howard Ehmke of the Athletics in 1929.

“If I had known that,” Mort said later in the dressing room, “I could have got two more besides Moore in the eighth.”

“Yes,” broke in Brother Walker, “but don’t forget, we weren’t taking any chances with McQuinn or Zarilla. Stephens had doubled, you remember, and McQuinn or Zarilla, both being lefties, were favored with a following wind and could have put the ball out of the park to tie up the game.”

Manager Southworth was all smiles.

“I guess that proves you can beat those American Leaguers,” he shouted above the din of a blaring phonograph and the yells of his happy players.

"Mort's big pitch was his fast ball," Walker told reporters. "He was throwing curves to right-handers and screwballs to left-handers; but when he wanted a pay-off pitch, he threw his fast one. He was really there today."

After the Series was over, baseball men generally agreed that Mort's victory was the turning point of the Series, and that the burly pitcher's smart play in the sixth was the crux of the situation. Winning that fifth game gave the Cardinals the momentum to sweep over the Browns the next day and win their second world's championship in three years.

The two Coopers were happy, both over Mort's victory and the team's taking of the title. But no one in all St. Louis was more pleased than a tall, gracious woman who happens to be their mother.

If this story were a Hollywood scenario, it would probably open with this charming lady walking around the rooms of her house in Atherton, Missouri, some twenty years ago, picking up a multiplicity of baseball paraphernalia.

"What a family!" she would exclaim. "If it isn't baseball, it's more baseball. And dad's as bad as the boys."

Today, of course, Mrs. Cooper has no regrets; but in the days when her family was growing up,

she saw bats and balls and spikes even in her dreams.

Her husband, the boys' father, R. J. Cooper, was a rural mailman by vocation and a baseball player by avocation. The national pastime was his hobby and sole recreation. He himself was a pitcher, and he managed a semipro club in Independence, Missouri, where the family later lived.

Of the two brothers on the Cardinals, Mort is the elder, having been born March 2, 1914. Walker was next in line, his birthday having been January 8, 1916. Due to their father's interest in baseball, they came by their talents naturally, and so did their brothers.

Altogether there are five boys in the Cooper family, and all like the game. R. J., Jr., the eldest, was an outfielder. The family feels that he, too, could have gone a long way in baseball. But soon after leaving school he secured a good job as general foreman of a river construction gang and did not want to leave it.

Jimmy, at twenty, who was a pitcher, had been in the Navy four years. At the time the 1944 World Series was being played, he was in the South Pacific. Sammy, the youngest, was only sixteen at that time, but he was good enough to work out with the Cardinals at Sportsman's Park when

the club was at home. With Mort's shining example before him, it is small wonder that he, too, wanted to be a hurler.

As a matter of fact, Walker himself when a kid wanted to be a pitcher. Only at the last minute before a game did he give in and agree to catch his brother's slants.

"Back in Atherton in our grade-school days," Walker declares, "we had a little team coached by our teacher, Miss Frances Montgomery. Mort could throw harder than any one else in school, so he was made pitcher. The only trouble was that I wanted to pitch, too; but when the game came around, I gave in and caught. I've been doing it ever since."

Before the Coopers graduated into organized baseball, they were playing in the Ban Johnson League in Missouri. They like to recall one game in which they acted as a battery, with their father coaching at third base.

"Dad kidded us before that game," Mort remembered, "by saying that if we didn't get a home run apiece, we couldn't have any dinner that night. Being growing country boys with healthy appetites, Walker and I said to ourselves that that would never do. So we both hit homers with a man on base and won the game 4-0."

Mort, twenty-two months elder than his brother, entered organized baseball two years before Walker did. The hurling end of the twosome first appears in the record books in 1933, when he played with Des Moines, Muskogee, and Springfield of the Western League. It was at Springfield that he became affiliated with the Cardinal chain.

He played with Elmira and Columbus in 1934, but his career was temporarily blighted by an automobile accident in which he hurt his shoulder, so that his effectiveness was lessened for the next two seasons. In 1937, with Columbus, he compiled a 13-13 record; and after spring training with the Cardinals in 1938 he found himself on the way to Houston of the Texas League.

Meanwhile, Walker was graduating from the Ban Johnson League into organized ranks in 1935, when his first professional club was Rogers in the Arkansas State League. He moved to Springfield in the Western Association and to Sacramento in the Pacific Coast League before he finally caught up to Morton in Houston in 1938. At that, however, the brothers had only half a year together as a battery, for Walker had spent the first half of the season with Mobile in the Southeastern League.

Mort's record with Houston shows thirteen vic-

ories and ten defeats, but those bare figures do not tell the whole story. At one point he won seven games in a row. He had seven shutouts in those thirteen victories. Above all, he had a sensational strike-out record, fanning 201 batters in the 202 innings he worked. In one game against Oklahoma City that season he whiffed fifteen batters and gave up only one hit. A dozen strike-outs a game were nothing.

"When I was with Houston in 1938," Cooper declared, "I developed the screwball I use in the majors today. The pitch was one shown me the year before by Mike Ryba, who had told me then that my stuff wasn't varied enough to get by in the majors."

In 1939 Mort made the Cardinals for good. Walker still had two more years of the minors to go. He played with Asheville of the Piedmont League in 1939 and with Columbus of the American Association in 1940. In the latter year he did play six games for the Cardinals, but he did not become a permanent member until the following year.

The brothers have had many thrills in baseball. Probably their tops was Mort's winning of that fifth game of the 1944 World Series. But the game they remember best and the one which means the

most to them down deep in their hearts is the second game of the 1943 World Series in which Mort beat the New York Yankees 4-3 for the only Cardinal victory of that Series.

The victory, however, was only half the story. Behind the scene was the fact that the boys' father had died the very morning of the game. Robert John Cooper at the age of fifty-eight had passed on of a heart attack in the early morning hours of October 6, 1943.

"Walker knew about Dad before I did," Mort said. "He got a call from Missouri about six o'clock on the morning of the game; and although I had breakfast with him and his wife, he still didn't tell me. He had told Bill (Southworth), but I didn't learn about it until the three of us had a conference in Bill's room at about ten o'clock.

"Bill was wonderful," he went on. "He said, 'Mort, you can go home if you wish, or stay here and pitch. The decision is yours; and we want you to know that whatever you decide will be all right with me and the team.'

"I looked at Walker, and he looked at me," Mort declared. "Both of us knew immediately what Dad would have wanted me to do.

"I told Southworth I'd pitch," Mort said quietly. "And that was all there was to it."

The Yankees had won the first game of the Series, Spud Chandler beating Max Lanier 4-2. The following day 68,579 fans crowded Yankee Stadium, fully in sympathy with the two Cooper boys and honestly pulling for the towering Cardinal hurler to come through.

Once again Mort pitched his heart out. He gave up six hits. The Yankees got their only runs in the ninth, when they put on a rally good for two markers.

But the Cardinals had already made sure of the game for the brothers. In the third inning Marty Marion hit a 320-foot homer into the left-field stands for one run. In the fourth the Cards came up with three more tallies, headed by Ray Sanders' homer into the right-field stands with Kurowski on base.

The last of the ninth was tense baseball. Bill Johnson doubled to left center and Charley Keller tripled to left over Litwhiler's head, scoring Johnson. Bill Dickey lined to Chuck Klein at second base, but when Nick Etten grounded to Klein, Keller scored. With the bases empty, Cooper forced Joe Gordon to lift a high foul over near the Yankee dugout.

Walker caught the ball for the final out, and instead of continuing on his way to the exit that

leads off the field, he waited for his brother to come in off the mound. The huge throng watched, but only a few in those thousands could have known the world of feeling that passed between the pair as Walker handed Mort the ball.

After the game Mort left for home in Independence, Missouri, which is only a short distance outside of Kansas City, while Walker remained to catch for the Cardinals in the third game in New York. Mort pitched one more game in that 1943 Series after the site shifted to St. Louis—the last one, in which Bill Dickey ended it all with a two-run homer in the sixth to score the only two runs of the game. Chandler was invincible as he won his second game of the Series for the Yanks.

The newspapers were full of admiration for Mort after he had won the game in New York, but the towering right-hander was quick to turn the praise in Walker's direction.

"You know," he said earnestly, "the papers all wrote about how the pressure was on me. But really the pressure was on Walker. He not only had his job to do, which was telling me what to pitch, but he was also pulling for me to win. He had a double load. I had only one."

The Coopers are the first brother battery in the majors since Rick and Wes Ferrell broke up and

the first for the Cardinals since Pitcher Mike and Catcher Jack O'Neill worked together in 1902. The two brothers find it easy to click together.

"Walker really doesn't have to give me signals," Mort declared. "We've worked together so long that he knows what I'm planning to throw and I know what he wants me to throw."

Mort values his brother's capabilities highly, and not only in the catching department.

"He handles pitchers well," he said, "but that's not the only department in which he shines. At bat he is one of the best right-handers in the league. He hits line drives, not very high, but he hits them solidly; and he gets his share of hits."

By the same token Walker is proud of his brother.

"Who else in the league recently has won more than twenty games a season for three years in a row?" he asks with a lift of his eyebrows. That question is the sixty-four dollar one.

Mort likes to point out, apropos of Walker's batting, that the catcher in one hitting streak in St. Louis made fifteen hits in his nineteen times at bat.

And Walker, in turn, likes to point to the one-hitters that Mort has had.

"Two of them should have been major-league

no-hitters," he claims. "He should have had one in Philadelphia one day. On one play the ball squirted out of Verban's glove at second; and on another play Marion stubbed his toe fielding the ball and threw late to first. Both plays were called hits. Those were errors in my book, and they were the only hits which were credited off Mort's delivery that afternoon.

"In Brooklyn in '43, Mort had a no-hitter going into the seventh inning, when Herman hit a blooper to right. Musial just missed getting it; and that was the Dodgers' lone hit."

Mort also pitched a one-hitter in Philly one afternoon, when the only safety was a pinch-hit single by Wasdell in the eighth.

Both of the boys had major-league boyhood heroes. Walker, once he turned to catching, looked up to the Yankees' great star, Bill Dickey, who later gave Walker many tips on the art of receiving. Mort's was Lon Warneke, who first starred for the Chicago Cubs and the Cardinals. In fact, Mort's seven-year-old youngster is named Lonnie, after Warneke.

Mort thinks the best National League batter he ever pitched to was Mel Ott, the New York Giants' popular manager, whom Mort has always greatly admired.

"He really hits me," is his succinct comment, which in itself tells all.

Joe Di Maggio of the Yankees is tops of all ball players, in Mort's opinion.

"He's the greatest ball player there ever was," maintains Mort. "He could do everything; and he made it appear that it was a real pleasure to play baseball."

In the catching department Walker is usually quiet behind the plate. Yet there are certain players on opposing clubs who will never believe that. Walker can always get the goats of Stan Hack and Dom Dallessandro of the Cubs, Frank McCormick of the Cincinnati Reds, and Bob Elliott of the Pirates.

"Walker makes them see red, not the ball," is the way Mort puts it.

Besides his sore arm in 1934-36, Mort came up with a sore shoulder in 1939. It was in midseason, and it hurt him severely to throw. He couldn't get the ball over the plate, and he was knocked out of six straight games.

"I wanted to have an operation," Mort said, "but Carl Hubbell and Hal Schumacher advised me to wait. I decided I couldn't afford to wait, because when a shoulder is gone, you're really done for.

"I had a three-year contract at that time, and I felt that if I had the operation right away, I would have two more summers to get right again.

"I had the thing done in midseason, and came back and won six games before the end of the year. Needless to say, I'm very glad now that I had it done."

Both of the brothers are married. Mort took the step first, marrying Bernadine Owen on October 14, 1936. Walker was not far behind, wedding Doris Ann Triplett on October 31, 1937. Mort's son Lonnie is an only child, as is Walker's daughter, Sarah Ann, aged five.

The two Coopers are avid hunters. They learned this art back on their farm days in Missouri. Once in a trapshooting meet in Kansas City, Mort broke 196 out of 200 clay targets.

According to Mort's wife, the big fellow is so accurate with his rifle or shotgun that his friends don't like to go hunting with him as often as they used to.

"I can remember the time," she said once, "when a lot of the boys used to go with Mort shooting quail, but Mort always got the birds, and the other fellows had nothing left to shoot at."

And that is probably just the way the Browns felt after the World Series of 1944.

THE COOPER BROTHERS

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WILLIAM WALKER COOPER

Born January 8, 1916, at Atherton, Missouri. Height, 6:03. Weight, 195.
Brown eyes and hair. Throws and bats right-handed.

Year	Club	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1934	Springfield	Western	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1935	Rogers	Ark. St.	91	334	64	120	26	4	14	79	.359
1936	Springfield	Western	129	486	60	136	28	8	6	95	.280
1937	Sacramento	P.C.	83	241	28	64	12	3	3	29	.266
1938	Mobile	S.E.	61	233	25	67	9	2	4	42	.288
1938	Houston	Texas	41	141	14	33	9	4	0	13	.234
1939	Asheville	Pied.	130	497	80	167	22	15	8	80	.336
1940	Columbus	A.A.	131	477	61	144	29	12	3	53	.302
1940	St. Louis	Nat.	6	19	3	6	1	0	0	2	.316
1941	St. Louis	Nat.	68	200	19	49	9	1	1	20	.245
1942	St. Louis	Nat.	125	438	58	123	32	7	7	65	.281
1943	St. Louis	Nat.	122	449	52	143	30	4	0	81	.319
1944	St. Louis	Nat.	112	397	56	126	25	5	13	72	.317
Major League Totals			433	1503	188	447	97	17	21	240	.290

WORLD SERIES RECORD

1942	St. Louis	Nat.	5	21	3	6	1	0	0	4	.286
1943	St. Louis	Nat.	5	17	1	5	0	0	0	0	.294
1944	St. Louis	Nat.	6	22	1	7	2	1	0	2	.318
World Series Totals			16	60	5	18	3	1	0	6	.300

ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

1942	National		2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	.500
1943	National		2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	.500
1944	National		5	1	2	0	0	0	0	1	.400
All-Star Game Totals			9	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	.444

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MORTON CECIL COOPER

Born March 2, 1914, at Atherton, Mo. Height, 6.02¼. Weight, 210.

Brown eyes and hair. Throws and bats right-handed.

Year	Club	League	G	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg
1933	Des Moines, Musk., Springfield	Western	26	104	7	5	.583	117	100	...	79	83	..
1934	Elmira	NYP	29	185	10	12	.455	192	107	91	104	128	4.4
1934	Columbus	A.A.	3	11	0	1	.000	16	7	7	5	6	5.7
1935	Columbus	A.A.	27	101	6	7	.462	109	55	41	62	59	3.6
1936	Columbus	A.A.	17	85	5	7	.417	90	56	45	68	33	4.7
1936	Asheville	Pied.	1	6	0	0	.000	7	...	...	3	4	..
1937	Columbus	A.A.	39	178	13	13	.500	183	92	81	147	68	4.1
1938	Houston	Texas	31	202	13	10	.565	161	63	52	201	54	2.3
1938	St. Louis	Nat.	4	24	2	1	.667	17	11	8	10	12	3.0
1939	St. Louis	Nat.	45	211	12	6	.667	208	94	76	130	97	3.2
1940	St. Louis	Nat.	38	231	11	12	.478	225	103	93	95	86	3.6
1941*	St. Louis	Nat.	29	187	13	9	.591	175	88	81	118	69	3.9
1942	St. Louis	Nat.	37	279	22	7	.759	207	73	55	152	68	1.7
1943	St. Louis	Nat.	37	274	21	8	.724	228	81	70	141	79	2.3
1944	St. Louis	Nat.	34	252	22	7	.759	227	74	69	97	60	2.4
Major League Totals			224	1458	103	50	.673	1287	524	452	743	471	2.7

* Operated on for removal of growth from pitching elbow, June 23, and did not return to mound until August 3.

WORLD SERIES RECORD

Year	Club	League	G	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg
1942	St. Louis	Nat.	2	13	0	1	.000	17	10	8	9	4	5.2
1943	St. Louis	Nat.	2	16	1	1	.500	11	5	5	10	3	2.4
1944	St. Louis	Nat.	2	16	1	1	.500	9	2	2	16	5	1.1
World Series Totals			6	45	2	3	.400	37	17	15	35	12	3.0

ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

Year	League	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg
1942	National	3	0	1	.000	4	3	3	2	0	9.0
1943	National	2½	0	1	.000	4	4	4	1	2	15.0
All-Star Game Totals		5½	0	2	.000	8	7	7	3	2	11.0

Editor's Note: In May, 1945, The Boston Braves completed the biggest baseball transaction of the war era when they purchased Morton Cooper, ace pitcher of the world-champion St. Louis Cardinals, for \$100,000 and Pitcher Charley (Red) Barrett.

JOSEPH EDWARD (JOE) CRONIN

“The Boy Manager”

CHAPTER VI

JOSEPH EDWARD (JOE) CRONIN
"THE BOY MANAGER"

IF ever a Horatio Alger tale had its counterpart in major-league baseball, that story is found in the colorful career and vigorous life of Joseph Edward Cronin.

The narrative, following the familiar Alger pattern of poverty to riches, would start with Cronin's birth on October 12, 1906, in the city of San Francisco. It would follow as lusty a path as ever wound through baseball, a path that took the lantern-jawed Irishman to the top of the diamond world.

Correctly speaking, Cronin was never a victim of poverty, but his story is that of a high school boy who climbed from sand-lot baseball to one of the highest paid managerial jobs in the major leagues. It is the story of a youngster who did not look particularly like a ball player, but who did not let that stand in his way. It is the story of a fellow who got there the hard way, and who made

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good by letting absolutely nothing interfere with his ambitions.

The present manager of the Boston Red Sox in the American League was never considered a particularly graceful athlete; nor was he particularly fleet of foot as a youth. What he possessed, however, were the broad, powerful shoulders of a boxer; the sharp, clear eyes of a marksman, that helped make him one of the greatest hitters in baseball; and the jutting, determined jaw of a true-blue Irishman.

These attributes he had on the sand lots of San Francisco. These same qualities he carried with him into professional baseball. They pushed Cronin ahead until he had won the American League championship for the Washington Senators and established himself as one of baseball's greats—when he was just twenty-six years of age!

On the wings of this success at Washington, he was signed on October 25, 1934, as manager of the Boston Red Sox.

The purchase price of Shortstop-Manager Cronin, in the deal between Boston and Washington, was never officially reported as \$250,000, but it was never officially denied at that figure. That total was one of the biggest sale prices ever mentioned in baseball, a hardheaded business which,

in the glory days between World War I and World War II, sold and bought the services of players and managers as though money grew on trees.

The length of the contract Cronin signed with the Red Sox was never affirmed by anyone involved. The salary he accepted was never officially revealed. Yet men who have for years been in high positions in baseball maintained that Cronin signed a three-year contract with the Boston club for a salary in the vicinity of \$25,000 a year.

For a man born in moderate circumstances, the signing of a \$25,000-a-year contract twenty-eight years later just because he could play shortstop, larrup the ball with the leaders, and handle men, indicated that the career of Joseph Edward Cronin had been truly fashioned after those success stories of the dime-novel worlds of Horatio Alger.

Cronin, indeed, was an Alger hero in flesh and blood, ready and quite able to thrill the baseball lovers of the world.

He was reared in a San Francisco district teeming with baseball stars, practically all of them idolized by young Cronin—a district that produced such diamond greats as Harry Heilman, Lefty O'Doul, and Bob Meusel.

On those 'Frisco sand lots Cronin practiced and played until he had molded himself into a mighty

hitter and one of the most efficient shortstops in all the Bay Region. He advanced steadily until he was appointed manager of the Washington Senators at the conclusion of the 1932 season.

In this job he succeeded the popular Walter Johnson, renowned "Big Train" of the pitcher's mound; and he became the youngest major-league manager in the game up to that time. Lou Boudreau of the Cleveland Indians later claimed the title, when he signed as manager of the Tribe in 1941 at the age of twenty-four.

Clark Griffith, wily president of the Washington Senators club, may have played a hunch the day he appointed the pink-cheeked, jut-jawed Cronin as boss; or he may have had a stronger save-a-dollar financial motive behind his move. Whatever it was, Griffith's prayer was answered—that Joe would lift the Senators to the top of the American League standing for the first time since 1925.

Cronin took over a Washington club composed of veterans who felt slighted that one of them was not chosen instead of the youthful Irishman. And there were even a few recruits who doubted that the new, peach-fuzz manager knew any more about the game than some of themselves.

Cronin refused to be daunted by these conditions. He took a firm grip upon the Washington

helm and piloted the outfit to the league championship in 1933. The Senators met Bill Terry's National League New York Giants only to lose four games to one in the World Series.

Although Cronin's Senators bowed to the Giants, the youthful Washington pilot was considered one of the "seven wonders of the world."

"It wasn't everyone who could pull to the American League title such a mixture of jealous veterans and wondering rookies," was the consensus of opinion in the baseball world. "He deserves credit for welding the team into a cohesive unit."

On Cronin's team that year, the young man himself played shortstop. The rest were: Morris (Moe) Berg, catcher; Oswald (Ossie) Bluege, third base; W. Cliff Bolton, catcher; Leon (Goose) Goslin, outfield; Davis S. Harris, outfield; John L. Kerr, second base; Joseph Kuhel, first base; Henry E. (Heinie) Manush, outfield; Charles S. Myer, second base; Edgar C. Rice, outfield; Fred W. Schulte, outfield; J. Luke Sewell, catcher; Alvin F. Crowder, Jack Russell, Walter C. Stewart, Alphonse T. Thomas, Monte M. Weaver, Earl O. Whitehill, Alexander B. McColl, Robert J. Burke, and Edwin V. Chapman, pitchers.

Cronin's path to fame and glory at Washington

as he climbed toward his manager's post and his lordly pay with Boston was not all roses and sweet music. He overcame many obstacles and had countless opportunities to prove that his strong Irish profile was a sign of a strong fighting spirit within.

Following his high school days in San Francisco, Cronin attended Sacred Heart College in that city. When he left Sacred Heart, he turned his attention to baseball, playing for a semiprofessional team at Napa, California, where his hitting and infielding attracted Joe Devine, scout for the Pittsburgh Pirates in the National League.

Devine signed young Cronin to a Pittsburgh contract in 1925, farming him out to Johnstown of the Middle Atlantic League. The following year he was shifted to New Haven in the Eastern League.

Cronin was recalled to the Pittsburgh club in 1926, but was sold to Kansas City in 1928. It was from Kansas City that Cronin made his way to Washington.

Eighteen years later, Cronin was still firmly established with the Red Sox. In his pocket was a brand-new contract with Boston that guaranteed he would not have to move from his comfortable, modern home in suburban Newton for at least

another three years. He now could afford to look back with some degree of amusement at his earlier and discouraging struggles while at Pittsburgh in former years.

In 1926, '27, and '28, those days with the Pirates were anything but pleasant for the young, impatient, hotheaded Mr. Cronin. They were grim days in which Manager Owen J. (Donie) Bush, following his feat of steering his Pittsburgh club into the National League pennant in 1927, decided that his veteran shortstop, F. Glenn Wright, was a better all-around performer than his slightly awkward but heavy-hitting newcomer. Cronin was shipped to Kansas City.

Cronin staged a fight to prove to himself, to Bush, and to the fans back in Pittsburgh that his down-the-river trip to Kansas City was a grievous error. This was a clear-cut picture in 1932, when big Joe was manager of the pace-setting Washington Senators with a rousing batting average of .339. Meanwhile, Wright had by that time become just another day-in-day-out ball player no longer appreciated in Pittsburgh. As a matter of fact, he had been traded to the Brooklyn Dodgers, where he played only infrequently.

No wonder then, that when the owner of the Boston Red Sox sought a manager during the

autumn of 1934, he should cast longing eyes upon Shortstop Cronin and offer for his services the resounding price of \$250,000.

Thomas Austin Yawkey of Detroit and New York, a multi-millionaire in mining and timberland holdings, was the owner of the Red Sox that year. It was Yawkey who some time in October of 1934 walked into the office of Clark Griffith, president of the Washington Senators, and said:

"I am willing to pay this tremendous price for Cronin; and I will throw in Lynn Lary, an infielder for whom I originally paid \$35,000.

"That's my offer. Take it or leave it. I am leaving for New York by train at once. I want your decision as quickly as possible."

Needless to say, President Griffith decided immediately.

Thus was one of the biggest baseball trades accomplished—a transaction involving a reported price of a quarter of a million dollars for a single player, not to mention the outright gift of another—in the brisk, brusque manner so typical of the stocky, strongly built, nervously energetic owner of the Red Sox.

Cronin at once became manager of Yawkey's club, one of the most picturesque teams ever assembled in the major leagues.

For the reader to follow Cronin's career more easily it is necessary that this chapter touch upon his rich owner's background.

Thomas Austin Yawkey bought the Boston Red Sox from J. A. "Bob" Quinn on February 24, 1933, three days after his thirtieth birthday, at which time he had received a large inheritance to add to an already huge fortune. At the time Yawkey purchased the floundering Boston club from Quinn, Yawkey's wealth was estimated at \$50,000,000.

He was the nephew and adopted son of William Hoover Yawkey, Detroit traction and lumber king and flashy man-about-town. William Yawkey owned the Detroit Tigers of the American League from 1903 through 1907 and retained a half interest in the Detroit club until the time of his death in 1918.

The Yawkey fortune was not built by William Hoover Yawkey, but by William's father (Thomas' foster grandfather) William Fyman Yawkey, a hard-bitten Pennsylvania Dutchman, who gathered up mining and timberland opportunities at every turn of the wheel of life's fortune, until in 1867 the foundation of the Yawkey millions had been established.

Tom Yawkey was born in Detroit on February

21, 1903. At the age of seven, he was taken into the household of his uncle, William Hoover Yawkey. While he lived there as the adopted son of the owner of the Detroit club, the little boy became imbued with the love of well-played, major-league baseball. This feeling remained with him through the years.

That Yawkey could afford to spend money for the purchase of the Boston Red Sox is clear when the records show that he inherited \$4,000,000 from his mother and \$3,408,000 from his foster father. These millions Yawkey quickly doubled and trebled. While his quick purchase in connection with Boston baseball may have seemed like the action of a lifelong spendthrift, it is seen in a different light by Yawkey.

“Back in my childhood days,” he recalls with a wan smile, “my allowance was exactly one dollar a week.”

Young Thomas' education was gained at the Irving Preparatory School in Tarrytown, New York, Apel University, and Sheffield Scientific School at Yale University, from which he was graduated in 1925.

It was really a chance meeting between Yawkey and Edward Trowbridge Collins in the Hotel Alamac in New York City that pitched Yawkey

into his colorful chapter of baseball in Boston. The meeting took place when Ty Cobb, the great man of the Detroit line-up, introduced Yawkey and Collins, and young Yawkey hinted that he had the money and the eager inclination to own an American League baseball club. He didn't want just any club.

"I am an American Leaguer by birth," Yawkey told Collins, who was a veteran of the fabulous Philadelphia Athletics' glory days and a member of Connie Mack's famous million-dollar infield. "I know that the New York Giants are for sale, but I wouldn't buy a National League club."

It is possible that this conversation paved the way for the opening of negotiations for the stumbling Red Sox club, and, once the transaction was completed, for the appointment by Yawkey of Collins as vice president and general manager at Boston.

It was not long after his purchase of the Red Sox that Yawkey, in characteristic fashion, declared:

"I can't mess around with a loser."

And it was then that the youngest owner of a major-league club in history started to show the color of his money.

He remodeled Fenway Park, the home of the

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Red Sox, at an expense of \$750,000. He launched a campaign of player-buying that included such stars and their price tags as the following:

Joseph Edward Cronin, 2b.....	\$250,000
Robert Moses Grove, p.....	\$125,000
James Emory Foxx, 1b.....	\$135,000
William Werber, 3b.....	\$50,000
Roger (Doc) Cramer, cf.....	\$75,000
Henry (Heinie) Manush, cf.....	\$35,000
Eric McNair, 2b.....	\$50,000
Wesley Ferrell, p.....	\$50,000
Oscar Melillo, 2b.....	\$35,000
John Marcum, p.....	\$50,000
Fred Ostermueller, p.....	\$30,000
George Walberg, p.....	\$20,000

An Associated Press dispatch printed in newspapers on March 6, 1941, said that a careful check-up of the baseball situation in Boston indicated that from February 24, 1933 to the day of the publication of the story, Yawkey had spent \$4,280,612 in search of a world championship through a World Series winner.

A vast minor-league feeding system was accumulated, in which Louisville of the American Association, Little Rock of the Southern Association, and Rocky Mount of the Piedmont League were the gems.

Yawkey poured his millions into the project. Cronin played shortstop for the parent club and hit the ball with the best of American League sluggers. The minor-league farm system operated

under well-known baseball executives. The front office was under the direction of General Manager Collins himself, yet the star-studded Boston line-up, riddled by unpredictable and untamed temperaments, failed to live up to Owner Yawkey's expectations on the field of play.

Tens of thousands of New England fans cheered for the Yawkey-Cronin "million-dollar team" to win an American League pennant and the World Series. The Red Sox came close, but in those days the Yankees were riding high. Few there were among the Boston followers who could point a finger and accuse Cronin of shirking his task. It was quite a job to play shortstop every day and at the same time manage a team made up of temperamental stars.

It was not until after the outbreak of World War II—after he had been dispatched to Hawaii between seasons as part of the American Red Cross Overseas units for morale building among troops—that big-jawed Joe was finally forced to bench himself. Between seasons of 1942-43, Joe, despite his \$25,000 salary, worked in a war factory.

When the military draft in 1944 was digging deep into the playing reserves of all the major-league teams, however, Cronin stepped back into the line-up, filling a vacancy at first base. While

his fielding wasn't perfect by any means, his never failing batting eye kept rival moundsmen in constant fear. Then—after several weeks of terrible physical punishment, he was stricken with a "Charley horse" and forced to retire during May of 1944.

Opposing pitchers now breathed sighs of relief. They never knew when he would put their Sunday pitch out of the park.

The physical punishment Cronin was able to withstand and still keep going marked him from his very early days in baseball. He was a player of the "old school," those who always carried on even under hardship.

In the late 1930's and early 1940's, as salaries increased and living became easier, pampered baseball stars were often out of their team line-ups for days and weeks with small or even fancied injuries, but Cronin was a man by himself. He sat out a game only when it was really impossible for him to play.

Once, during his first days with the Boston Red Sox, Cronin had an infected foot. For weeks he remained in the line-up with a shoe cut open at the sore spot.

In September of 1934, while he was with the Senators, he played for days, ignoring a sharp pain

in his right arm. X-rays disclosed that he had fractured a bone in the elbow. At that, Cronin only benched himself when physicians enlisted the aid of Clark Griffith, president of the club, and demanded that Cronin take himself out of the line-up.

In the same year of 1934, in July, several weeks before the fracture of his arm bone, Joe was hit squarely in the face by a line smash off the bat of "Pinky" Higgins, Philadelphia infielder. Despite intense pain, a swollen nose, and two black eyes, Cronin never lost a day in the line-up.

Were it not for the fact that as a "boy wonder" he took over the Washington Senators and piloted them to an American League championship and then went forward to take over the managerial job with the Boston Red Sox at \$25,000 a year, Cronin might well be termed the "hard luck kid."

Even on his wedding day, big Joe had his troubles. On September 27, 1934, at St. Matthew's Church in Washington, D. C., he married Mildred June Robertson, niece and adopted daughter of his employer, Clark Griffith.

During the ceremony, "the meanest cop in the world" circulated up and down the street outside the church. He tagged just one car—the bridegroom's.

Then, in 1937, at Sarasota, Florida, where the Red Sox trained prior to World War II, Mrs. Cronin had a slow, hard fight for her life after the birth of boy and girl twin babies.

A good "break of fortunes," from a boy's point of view, occurred when Cronin was a schoolboy at Mission High in San Francisco. The schoolhouse burned down!

Cronin and his mates were thrown out onto the sand lots and into baseball; and it was there that the young man received his foundation for a big-league career.

Cronin's parents were Michael J. Cronin, a native of County Cork in Ireland, and Mary (Carolin) Cronin. Joe's grandmother was Bridget Kelley, who was born in County Athlone, Ireland, and who moved with her family across the seas in the 1850's. The family arrived in Boston when Bridget was seven years old and remained there for ten years. Then they headed toward the Far West, where Bridget met and married a man named Carolin.

Mary Carolin, mother of Joe, was the first-born; but her son Joe was the third child in a family of boys born in an attractive Spanish-type home in San Francisco.

Cronin was a born athlete. When he was not

playing on championship baseball teams, he was winning championships on the tennis courts. His Cleveland Grammar School baseball team in 'Frisco' won the city title, and before the school-house burned down, Mission High took the title in its division of competition.

After a time, the Cronin family decided that despite the fire, the boy should leave the sand-lot games and continue his schooling. So Joe went forward to Sacred Heart College, where another championship team developed.

The young man was always a hustler. Just before he was signed to pilot the Red Sox team, General Manager Collins explained why Joe won the job:

"I liked his actions on the field of play. I liked his hustle and the enthusiastic way he questioned umpiring decisions. He was a young man with the stamp of an old-timer, and I liked him."

The story of how Cronin, after being shipped to Kansas City from Pittsburgh, regained the major leagues with Washington and started on the upward path, was told in amusing fashion by Joe Engel, Washington scout, back in 1928:

"I stepped off the rattler in Kansas City to satisfy my curiosity about a young infielder I had seen practicing before a Washington-Pittsburgh World

Series game some time before. I had followed the young fellow in Pittsburgh and thence to New Haven, and I was now going to watch him in Kansas City.

“It happened that Kansas City was the property of George Muehlebach, a thrifty Midwestern business man who owned a hotel and a big brewery. George may have been a good business man, but he was no judge of baseball talent.

“The day I stopped in Kansas City, young Cronin had experienced a poor afternoon on the field. Muehlebach and his colleagues were not enthusiastic. They were interested in selling me a player or two, but when I talked about Cronin, they attempted to shift the conversation on the grounds that the young fellow was not big-league caliber.

“Finally, after much hemming and hawing about other players and prices in the high \$20,000 and low \$30,000, I suddenly offered Muehlebach a quick \$10,000 for Cronin’s contract. Without a moment’s hesitation, the Kansas City owner accepted.”

That was how Cronin regained the major leagues with the Senators. But in his first few weeks with Washington, Owner Griffith thought that Engel had purchased a \$10,000 lemon.

This impression did not last long, however,

since on October 11, 1930, Cronin was voted the American League's most valuable player by a special committee of the organization of Baseball Writers of America.

What was good enough for the veterans of the press box was good enough for President Griffith of Washington, who no longer held the opinion that his scout had bought a lemon, but that he had picked up a sweet shortstop.

That the latter opinion was right was proved just eight years later when Cronin was the winner in a great All-American Popularity Contest conducted by a big chain of newspapers, in which the readers of almost every big-league city cast their ballots.

In his years at Boston, some fans have criticized his handling of his team; others have carped at his dealings with his pitchers. None, however, have been critical of his manner at the plate. That has won universal praise.

Possessor of one of the keenest pairs of eyes in the major leagues, Cronin rarely struck out. He could almost always be counted on to put plenty of wood to the ball.

Blessed with some of the greatest courage the game of baseball has ever seen, Joe never hesitated in his waning active playing career to put

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himself in as a pinch hitter when the chips were really down.

The sight of Joe Cronin shuffling up to the batter's box, wagging his heavy bludgeon, brought a thrill to the entire ball park.

It is the kind of thrill of which baseball can never have enough.

JOSEPH EDWARD CRONIN

Born October 12, 1906, at San Francisco, Calif. Height, 5.11.

Weight, 185. Throws and bats right-handed.

Year	Club	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1925	Pittsburgh	Nat.	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1925	Johnstown	M.A.	99	352	64	110	18	11	3	...	.313
1926	New Haven	Eastern	66	244	61	78	11	8	2	...	.320
1926	Pittsburgh	Nat.	38	83	9	22	2	2	0	11	.265
1927	Pittsburgh	Nat.	12	22	2	5	1	0	0	3	.227
1928	Kansas City	A.A.	74	241	34	59	10	6	2	32	.245
1928	Washington	Amer.	63	227	23	55	10	4	0	25	.243
1929	Washington	Amer.	145	492	72	139	29	8	8	60	.282
1930	Washington	Amer.	154	587	127	203	41	8	14	126	.346
1931	Washington	Amer.	156	611	103	187	44	13	12	126	.306
1932	Washington ¹	Amer.	143	557	95	177	43	18	6	116	.318
1933	Washington	Amer.	152	602	89	186	45	11	5	118	.309
1934	Washington ²	Amer.	127	504	68	143	30	9	7	101	.284
1935	Boston	Amer.	144	556	70	164	37	14	9	95	.295
1936	Boston	Amer.	81	295	36	83	22	4	2	43	.281
1937	Boston	Amer.	148	570	102	175	40	4	18	110	.307
1938	Boston	Amer.	143	530	98	172	51	5	17	94	.325
1939	Boston	Amer.	143	520	97	160	33	3	19	107	.308
1940	Boston	Amer.	149	548	104	156	35	6	24	111	.285
1941	Boston	Amer.	143	518	98	161	38	8	16	95	.311
1942	Boston	Amer.	45	79	7	24	3	0	4	24	.304
1943	Boston	Amer.	59	77	8	24	4	0	5	29	.312
1944	Boston	Amer.	76	191	24	46	7	0	5	28	.241

Major League Totals 2121 7569 1232 2282 515 117 171 1422 .301

¹ Appointed manager, succeeding Walter Johnson, Oct. 8, 1932.

² Sold to Boston and signed to manage Red Sox.

GILBERT LOTHAIR (GIL) DODDS

“The Flying Parson”



GILBERT LOTHAIR (GIL) DODDS

CHAPTER VII

GILBERT LOTHAIR (GIL) DODDS
"THE FLYING PARSON"

HIS arms flailing like a windmill, his head jerking with every stride, Gilbert Lothair Dodds pounded off the last bank of the track in New York's Madison Square Garden and headed for the finish line. His lungs bursting for air and his legs as heavy as lead, he thought he would never reach the tape. Suddenly there flashed through his mind a passage from the Bible:

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Emotionally lifted, he crashed through the tape; and as he later gulped for breath, he heard over the loud-speakers:

"And the time, ladies and gentlemen, a new indoor record for the mile—4:07.3."

That was at the Knights of Columbus meet on the night of March 11, 1944, and with the feat Dodds became one of the outstanding athletes in the history of foot racing in America. For a

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moment the headlines of the world's press paused, by-passing for a brief instant the million details of a global war—to sing the praises of a Scripture-quoting divinity student capable of running a record mile.

Up to this epic night Glenn Cunningham had been considered America's ace of the mile. But that evening in Madison Square Garden it dawned upon the public that Dodds had not only set a new indoor mile mark on an eleven-lap track, but that he had raced seven winning indoor miles under 4:09 in three seasons, in comparison with the four turned in by Cunningham in eight seasons.

That mile, however, was not the only thrill that Boston's footsy Parson had in store for the fans in the New York Garden. Less than an hour later he raced in and won the 1,000-yard event, despite the fact that he did not know he would compete in this race until the evening of the meet!

Dodds thoroughly proved that his faith in the quotation from Philippians 4:13 was faith not placed in vain.

And just one week later that same faith carried him to another world's record, a 4:06.4 clocking in the famous Bankers' Mile in Chicago.

It came as no surprise to the track public that Dodds could quote Scripture, for the serious, stu-

dious, fledgling minister often preached in communities surrounding Boston. In fact, he has preached in many cities throughout the country, and it has been an unbreakable rule with him never to race on Sunday. For him the National A. A. U. has moved races ahead a day, for they knew that his determination never to race on the Sabbath could not be shaken.

Despite his glowing times, curiously enough, Dodds has never been regarded as a "pretty" runner. His consistent successes many times came as a surprise to track fans, who considered that the slightly built fellow behind the spectacles appeared to work too hard. Contrasted to the light, springy steps of most of his rivals, Dodds' feet seemed to pound too hard. His arms appeared to pump like overburdened pistons pulling him ahead. Often his head bobbed so that it seemed in danger of being jerked right off his shoulders.

Dodds' rivals however, cared little about his running style. His lack of rhythm did not bother them half as much as the fact that he left them behind. They dwelt more on his ruthless ability to run them into the boards through the sheer power of his iron leg muscles.

Like the black-bearded Jack Dempsey and the dusky Joe Louis, both deadly bombers of the prize

ring, Boston's bespectacled Parson was always regarded as a "competitive killer." Very seldom indeed was Dodds forced to rate his pace according to that of his rivals.

Instead, he battled the mechanical, emotionless tickings of the clock. He ran so well that in the winter of 1944, track fans sometimes lost interest in Dodds' rivals and demanded that track-meet directors erect large clocks. Thus they might better witness his fight with the measured, heartless beat of the second hand and enjoy his races to the full.

For instance, the night Dodds clicked off his record 4:07.3 mile, he paced himself closer to the model of even time for three quarters of a mile than he had theretofore. His successive quarters were 0:60.8, 0:59.8, 0:62.8, and 0:63.9.

He came up with a typical 2:0.6 half-mile and a 3:03.4 three-quarters—clockings that were his own—with no hindrance from his three hapless rivals once he shot into the lead approaching the end of the second lap.

That night Dodds clipped a tenth of a second from the record of 4:07.4 held jointly by Chuck Fenske, Les MacMitchell, and Glenn Cunningham for an eleven-lap track. True, on March 3, 1938, Cunningham ran a 4:04.4 mile on the famous

track at Dartmouth College; and at that time it was the fastest mile ever raced, indoors or out. But Cunningham's feat has never been accepted except as a noteworthy performance, chiefly because board-track running is not recognized on an international basis. Also, the mark was clocked in an especially paced event.

Following that performance by Cunningham, Arne Andersson of Sweden raced a 4:01.6 mile, but that clocking was out of doors.

Incidentally, Cunningham's arranged pace at Dartmouth was 0:58.5 to the quarter; 2 minutes, 2 and 5-10ths seconds to the half-mile, and 3:04.2 for the three quarters. Cunningham flashed the final 440 yards in 0:60.2.

Yet the world of track fans in 1944 still waited for the four-minute mile. Dodds in 1944 believed in the four-minute mile and thought it possible. And, strangely enough, in contrast to his innate modesty, Dodds believed the four-minute mile to be within his own grasp. In an issue of the *Protestant Voice* in 1944, he explained his theory of the four-minute mile as well as his theory of life. Here it is:

"To me, one of the most glaring misconceptions of the average man on the street is that you can't be a business man, a professional man, or, most

remarkable of all, an athlete, and yet be a Christian. I wish to disprove this faulty conception and prove that it is the easiest thing in the world to be an athlete and still be a Christian. The athlete I have in mind is not the average type that you can buy by the dozen, but the type Paul speaks of in I Cor. 9:24-25:

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

“‘And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.’”

Dodds also wrote:

“In Hebrews 12:1-2 are the rules I follow in my training. I need no other rules. Not only do I follow them for running, but for life itself. What simpler rules can one find? They contain all the essentials for training, whether for sports or for life.

“Here are those rules:

“‘Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.’

“Not of myself, but in Christ, I firmly believe that nothing is impossible with God—not even the much debated four-minute mile. To me, the only way it will ever be accomplished is not by man himself, but by the will of God and through Christ, who will give the successful runner for that one time the strength in exceeding abundance and then only will it be accomplished for His glory.”

On February 9, 1944, the Flying Parson became the father of a son. He continued his meteoric career of mile running, but for several days he was in such a dither of new-parent excitement that he almost forgot all else.

In a fog of happiness he knew that the baby was born at 2:45 a. m. at the Boston Lying-In Hospital. He knew that Mrs. Dodds was well and happy—and also very proud. But in the excitement he forgot to learn his son’s weight until a considerable time later.

The baby’s name was registered as John Lloyd Dodds—the “Lloyd” being for Lloyd Hahn, the man who did most to start Gil on the road to fame as a track star. The “John” was for John (Jack)

Ryder, coach of track at Boston College, who took Dodds under his wing at Boston and fashioned him into a star.

The day after the son was born, Dodds went out and ran for himself the fastest mile in Boston's history on the boards of the Boston Garden. He breezed home twenty-one yards ahead of Bill Hulse, a tried and true star and often a titleholder in his own right, in a 4:09.5 epic in the Hunter Mile feature of the annual Boston Athletic Association meet. In one express-train flash, he blotted out Glenn Cunningham's 4:10 record of 1938, and while he was about it, he pounded home ahead of the 4:09.7 Boston indoor mark chalked up by Walter Mehl in the Prout Memorial Games in Boston during the winter of 1941.

He was almost a unanimous selection for the John J. Hallahan Memorial Trophy as the outstanding athlete in that 55th Boston Athletic Association meet.

During that Hunter Mile, an odd part of the performance was the fact that it didn't begin to look like a new record for the brand-new paper until late in the third quarter. He had lagged behind his three-man opposition during a whole quarter of a mile in the comparatively slow time of 0:63.6 seconds.

Then—swoosh!—Dodds suddenly touched off the fireworks.

The Flying Parson ripped ahead of Hulse at a gallop and 13,000 spectators came out of their seats. Hulse didn't struggle as Dodds went past him at a five-alarm pace. But from then to the end, Hulse could only labor to keep Dodds in sight.

The champion rolled through the second 440-yard stretch in the eye-opening time of 0:59.6 and kept piling on the steam until he was no less than twenty-one yards ahead and still going away as he broke the finish-line tape.

On the swift New York Garden track this would have been a 4:07.8 mile, since it was tactically a replica of the Millrose mile of seven nights earlier, although more than a second faster.

Wiping away all the fast indoor miles that Glenn Cunningham, Gene Fenske, Walter Mehl, and Leslie MacMitchell had hung up in previous years, Dodds had more steam in his boilers on the final whirl around the Garden track than at any time in his indoor career.

Naturally, Hulse was disappointed. He had thought he might make a race out of it after that first lap, but when the Parson opened the throttle, Hulse was made to look more like a signpost along a highway than a factor in a mile race.

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On another occasion, the night of February 19, 1944, the Bible-quoting comet contributed another brilliant event. He was clocked in 4:08 in the Baxter Mile of the New York Athletic Club's games at the New York Garden (the record for the event was 4:07.4) and the Parson gave everybody a thrill for his admission money.

He had the race entirely to himself, building up a ten-yard lead in the first quarter and finishing more than a half-lap ahead of Rudy Simms of New York University. The winner traveled the first 440 yards in 0:58.6, reached the halfway in 1:59.7, and arrived at the three-quarter mark in 3:03.3.

It was the fastest winning mile run by Dodds until that date, the same Dodds who was clocked in 4:06.5 behind the fabulous Gunder Haegg of Sweden the previous summer on the outdoor cinders of Harvard Stadium in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and who triumphed at the Chicago indoor relays during the winter of 1943 in 4:08.5.

On the night of February 25, 1944, also at the New York Madison Square Garden, Dodds practically soloed to the National Amateur Athletic Union's mile record of 4:08.3, scoring his fourth straight board-track victory by eighty solid yards over Don Burnham of Dartmouth College.

The Boston student of theology teetered ten

laps on the brink of an all-time indoor mark, blistering the gray racing strip with his speed. Although he "ran out of gas" on the last lap, as the inevitable result of the wildest pace ever poured into a championship mile, he smashed the world's indoor record for three quarters of a mile by going that far in 3:01.0 en route to his mile. Bill Hulse, the chemical engineer who ultimately came gushing home in fourth place, assumed the early pace, and hit the 440 yards post going at hook-and-ladder speed in 0:60.3 with Dodds hot on his heels.

Then the Bostonian took the bit in his own teeth, as it were, bolted to the front and proceeded to wallop his opposition with an awesome exhibition of sheer power. He was bristling and full of run at the half, which was accomplished in 1:58.8, the fastest opening 880 yards ever run during the course of an indoor mile. At that time Dodds was twenty strides ahead, and he was double that when he boomed past the three-quarters-mile checker in 3:01.0, needing only a 66-second final quarter to flatten all competitive indoor mile marks.

The big crowd of 16,000 persons seemed to be in a panic, exhorting Dodds to wipe out the 4:07.4 record. And Gilbert did not spare the horses. He thundered relentlessly onward in the ninth and tenth laps. Finally he reached the last long circuit,

and it was then that he started to "climb a ladder," as runners describe that dreadful last-ditch exhaustion of the race.

Dodds' legs became as of lead and his stride was heavy as he labored through the last nightmarish paces. He finished short of the indoor record, but grabbed the title meet mark with his second fastest indoor performance up to that night. Dodds' size eight-and-one-half spiked track shoes did not always fly with the precision that won him the 4:07.3 record the night he ran before 16,000 fans in Madison Square Garden, on March 11, 1944, with the verse from Philippians ringing in his ears.

As a matter of cold fact, when Gil first started out as a runner, he was conspicuous among the Cunningham, Fenske, Bonthron, MacMitchell crop of mile runners for his lack of a fiery last-lap finish. To make up for it, in his early days of mile running in 1942, Dodds, who was always regarded as possessing the strongest pair of legs among them all, usually started full speed from the gun and piled up such a tremendous three-quarters lead as to offset the home-stretch bids of his competitors.

While young Gilbert placed deep faith in his Bible, he also placed great confidence in Jack Ryder, coach of track for many years at Boston College. It was characteristic of Dodds, who was

by no means narrow-minded or bigoted, that as a sincere young Nebraskan son of a Midwestern Protestant minister, he should come to Boston and place himself completely under the direction of Coach Ryder, a devout Catholic with headquarters at the athletic plant of a well-known Jesuit college.

Earlier, in his high school days, young Dodds became interested in track because his home-town hero was Lloyd Hahn, a famous runner of a decade before. Hahn realized the coaching genius of Ryder and recommended that young Dodds go to Boston and place himself in the hands of this capable Boston College expert. Ryder got in touch with Lieut. Col. Walter A. Brown of Boston Garden, who became interested in Gil and arranged for him to come East.

Coach Ryder came to know his man inside out. In two years Ryder cut eight seconds from Dodds' 4:14 status early in 1942. Carving eight seconds from the timing of a miler is actually slicing fifty yards from the man's mile run.

While Dodds at first lacked the necessary finish sprint, he was always a remarkable miler. Seldom in his early days did he run slower than 4:09 nor faster than 4:08. Near the first days of his mile-running he came up with a mile in 4:06.1 and lost, and later was clocked as a loser in 4:06.5.

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Up to the time of his record mile he had raced eighteen major indoor miles in three years. He won thirteen, finished an on-your-heels second no less than six times, and was fourth once. In these days, at the very start, Dodds was either on top or a full yard away.

In January of 1942, in a time trial a week before the running of the famous Wanamaker Mile in New York's Madison Square Garden, Dodds was clocked by Ryder in a 440-yard dash at 0:56.6. Now Ryder's coaching commenced to take effect, for in the same trial in January of 1943, Dodds' time was 0:54.02. His trial before the same mile in 1944 was 0:52.05.

The progress under the direction of Coach Jack Ryder had been slow, perhaps, but the progress had been sure.

And so on the night of February 4, 1944 in New York's Garden, Parson Dodds—an expectant father and awaiting a wire from Boston in connection with this event—went out in the Wanamaker Mile and ripped through a furious three-quarters stretch and to a magnificent Wanamaker Mile of 4:10.6.

That night, with the wings of the stork whipping around his ears, he boomed past the three-quarters post at the record clip of 3:04, with an

eight-yard lead on Hulse, who on that night was the holder of the American citizen's outdoor mile record.

That long lead saved Gilbert, since two laps from home, the long-gaited Hulse commenced to climb back. At first Hulse was seven yards behind, but he crept up—six, five yards—and then only three yards away when the gun barked for the last long, long haul around the track. But Hulse couldn't make it; his rival was just too powerful. Dodds never wavered. Ashen-faced in his efforts to handle the steaming pace and then challenge, Hulse staggered on home but was still three long yards behind.

Don Burnham of Dartmouth—the I.C.A.A.A.A. champion—was third and far, far back. While Dodds did not crack the Wanamaker Mile record of 4:07.4, his mile effort was still the third fastest ever run in this famous trophy event, and again he had made history.

Actually, Dodds was upset right at the start of the Wanamaker Mile, since he studiously refrained from being involved in a traffic jam at the first corner. In a five-man field, Dodds was fifth, with Hulse ahead and attempting to fight fire with fire by going along at a smoking pace. Hulse pounded through the first 440-yards stretch in

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0:62.4, which was really kicking up dust. But right after the first-quarter post, Gilbert Dodds shot into the lead.

The crowd stood up as one person and howled so that the words echoed from the lofty rafters:

“Pour it on, Dodds!”

And Dodds did. He ran his second quarter-mile in the stunning time of 0:59.7. That spurt blew everybody out of the contention except Hulse, and even Hulse was laboring. Dodds added a 0:62.7 third quarter which naturally sewed up the race.

While he and Hulse had little drive over the final 200 yards, Dodds was the stronger man as they thundered down the home stretch. Hulse, on his part, did a 4:11.2 for his first major indoor mile effort of 1944.

Who is this Gilbert Lothair Dodds, the master miler of 1944, the boy with the record miles on the tips of his toes and Bible quotations on the tip of his tongue?

Gil's serious mission in life in 1944 was studying for the ministry at Gordon School of Theology in Boston, with the expectation that he would be graduated in 1945.

A typical day in the young man's life commenced at 6 a.m. After breakfast and early morn-

ing devotions, he started out to school. In the afternoon, this son of a Protestant minister invariably reported to Jesuit Boston College to practice under Coach Jack Ryder. At the end of his day's athletic training, he returned to his Longwood Avenue home in Boston, but he returned home in an unusual manner—he ran every step of the way, and the way was five miles long! After supper he studied—his school thesis for 1944 was "Palestine of Today"—and then to bed.

During his first days in Boston, the boy from the plains of Nebraska was worried for fear he might be "backsliding." He was once heard to remark to a friend:

"Back in the West, I used to go to bed on the dot of nine o'clock, but since I've come to Boston, I'm often not in bed until ten."

As one of the greatest mile runners in the world, a man who keeps his mind on minutes and seconds, Dodds likes to conduct his life "on the dot." During 1944, on his way from Boston to New York to run one of the mile races, the young Parson refused to accompany friends into the dining car until the watch on his wrist, consulted time after time, indicated that the hour was exactly 1:25 p.m. At that precise time he arose with a genial smile.

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"I never eat my noon lunch until 1:30 o'clock," he explained as he finally led the march toward the dining car.

The young Parson, an impeccable trainer, was by no means anybody's fool, but his honesty was as strict as his code of life. While others might have been tempted to pad their expense accounts, Dodds was often known to travel by coach while men of lesser fame rode in Pullman cars. Often he was known to return small sums from expense money advanced for fare, meals, and hotels.

What with his studies, his training, and his mile races, Dodds traveled over New England, speaking in big-city and small-town Protestant pulpits. One Sunday he traveled nearly a hundred miles and spoke in as many as three churches in three different communities.

A native of Kansas, Gil went to high school in Falls City, Nebraska, and was graduated from Ashland College in Ohio. He first became interested in running because Lloyd Hahn was a well-known hero in Falls City.

Dodds is one who believes that the ministry and athletics are quite compatible because "living a Christian life makes it all the easier to be an athlete."

Gil always thought children should be encour-

aged to go in for sports, since sports rated as the cleanest hobby a person could have.

"Athletics and Christianity both demand clean living and high ideals," was always the Parson's theory. "Those who find it hard to be good Christians will find it hard to be sportsmanlike athletes. Christianity makes it easier to take a beating. When I think of the history of the apostles and how they suffered, then losing a race seems like nothing. A beating just makes me stronger and more determined for the next time."

Dodds believed in sports and exercise so thoroughly that he often remarked that he would keep on running in meets as long as he was able and had time. But if his religious calling should interfere with competition on the boards and cinders, the Parson said he would run "just for the exercise, anyway."

"Many people neglect care of the body. I think exercise is essential to getting the most out of life," was often a Dodds quote.

Dodds has held a variety of summertime jobs during his career as a divinity student in Boston. He worked as a voluntary lifeguard; in a bakery, in libraries, in orchards; operating a trap line; and toiling on a State highway under construction.

During his summer in a bakery Dodds became

fascinated with the process of cooking and especially the production of hot, heaven-smelling, like-mother-made bread. So while he was in Boston, he often whiled away time between studies, races, and jobs by mixing and baking bread in his own kitchen, as a form of relaxation.

Gil was married to his high school sweetheart during his freshman year at Ashland College. His bride was Irma Seeger. After six years of married life and at the peak of his mile-running career, the Flying Parson in 1944 told reporters:

"I advocate early marriages. It tends to make one settle down."

Dodds, who in 1944 was regarded as America's Number One athlete, was unpretentious and sincere. No one doubted that his contribution to the ministry would be as great as his contribution to amateur athletics. An indication of his remarkable modesty came to light around Christmas of 1943 when, out of a clear sky, he received a Christmas-greeting cable from Gunder Haegg, the fabulous distance runner in far-off Sweden. Despite the fact that others regarded him as America's top-ranking athlete, Dodds was surprised that Haegg should even remember him as the nippy little American who had made competition so lively during Haegg's tour of American outdoor

tracks the previous summer. He was like a child with a new toy and was overwhelmed with joy over the cable. He never tired of whipping the message out of his pocket to show to chance acquaintances.

On the last day of February, 1942, when he came over the mile-running horizon like a thunderbolt, Dodds reacted in a way that was typical of him. On that day he raced to the mile championship in New York's Madison Square Garden. He won the National mile title in his very debut with a 4:08.7 effort.

An hour before the championship meet, it was definitely decided that the Flying Parson would run the mile event. It was then that Coach Ryder and his protégé put their heads together and decided that the young athlete did not have sufficient training to engage the mighty Greg Rice over a route as long as three miles, even though Dodds had been attempting the difficult three-mile route in practice.

This decision was a crossroads in Dodds' career and it switched him over to the path to fame as a miler.

He promptly became a National champion in his debut. The race was blueprinted at the Boston College track during trial runs at least a week before. At that time he and Coach Ryder decided

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that he should run the first quarter in 0:59.0; then continue at 2:03.0 and 3:06.0.

The faith that Ryder had in his young divinity student friend and the quiet confidence that Dodds held in his coach and himself were not misplaced. Before the thousands of spectators that night the novice competitive miler clicked off his race in 0:60.0; 2:03.3 and 3:06.7! The whole sports world applauded.

Truth to tell, Dodds had a bad start in this race; otherwise he might have ripped into Cunningham's time of 4:07.4 (a record held by Cunningham, Fenske, and MacMitchell). Intent upon breaking quickly into the lead and thus avoiding all traffic on the first turn, he made one false start, and the field was recalled. This made the young man overcautious on the second start, and he was left flatfooted on the mark in a six-man field. But he came from behind like a true champion and won the championship in his debut in a field of five other crack runners.

At the end of his epoch-writing race, the first thing Dodds did was to rush to Coach Ryder for a heartfelt handclasp of appreciation for all that Ryder had done for him; and his next most important act was to rush out and dispatch a telegram of thanks to Lloyd Hahn, the man who had discov-

ered him as a potential star seven years before, back in Falls City.

Dodds, twenty-six years old on June 23, 1944, was the son of an athlete and even in his boyhood days seemed destined to climb to the top in some form of athletics and to gain a notable place in the ministry. He hit one of his peaks in track early in 1944 when he was awarded the James E. Sullivan Memorial Trophy, an honor voted annually to the athlete who by his performance, example, and influence as an amateur and as a man, has done the most to advance the cause of sportsmanship during the previous year. This marked a high spot in Gil's career.

Gil was the son of Rev. James Gilbert Dodds, who also attended Ashland College in Ohio, where he was a football and baseball star. There were two sons and three daughters in the Dodds brood, the eldest of whom was the "Flying Parson." Like his Dad and big brother, Myron Dodds was an athlete and in 1943 was a ranking member of the football and baseball teams of the Smithville, Ohio, High School.

Although Rev. James Gilbert Dodds in 1944 was pastor of the First Brethren Church in Smithville, Ohio, it was in the early 1930's when the family lived in Falls City, Nebraska, that his son

took his first bite at track competition and found that he liked it.

"I tried football and baseball in high school," Gil once recalled, "but I had a leg injury in football, so I stood around watching the Falls City track candidates practice. They asked me if I thought I could make good enough time to gain a place on the team."

Naturally, Dodds jumped at the invitation. The first times he raced, he finished second in a half-mile frolic and fourth in his very first mile at the age of fifteen years.

He was straightway enrolled as a fifteen-year-old member of the Falls City High School varsity track team, and he started to train himself.

"I would run around the lake at Falls City until I got too tired to run any more," said Dodds.

True, this was not the ideal method of training, but the young boy showed iron determination, and his stern code of practice as a fifteen-year-old may have been the background of his terrific pace ten years later.

At sixteen, young Gil went forward to win 880-yard runs and interscholastic mile championships in the Southeastern and Northeastern districts of Nebraska until as a high school senior in 1937 he chalked up a 4:28.01 mile that not only won the

State schoolboy championship but still stood as the Nebraska record in 1944.

It was during the last two years of Dodds' high school running career that Lloyd Hahn, track star of a previous decade, took over the direction of young Gil's training and halted those exhausting around-the-lake practice jaunts. Hahn also coached him by mail during his four years at Ashland College, paving the way until Dodds could go to Boston and take his final brushup with Coach Jack Ryder of Boston College in preparation for his record-breaking days of 1944.

These two men have earned Gil's everlasting gratitude and will always hold a high place in his heart.

"They showed me the way materially," he declares sincerely, "and the Bible leads me spiritually. The combination can't be beaten."

On Saturday evening, January 20, 1945, Dodds ended his great career as obscurely as he began it. On the balcony saucer that is the track at the Boston Y.M.C.A., with only about a thousand spectators watching, Gil pounded off twenty-four laps as easily as though it were a practice jaunt and won the feature two-mile run of the Y's 29th annual track and field games.

The race over, and the time of 9:58.4 duly

recorded, Gil reached the little spiral stairway and was mobbed by a flock of high school youngsters for whom he signed autographs.

"Let's take a picture of you hanging up your shoes," said a news photographer in the crowd.

Gil smiled. "That's a good idea," he said. "I guess I won't need them again."

Earlier in the day Dodds had been graduated from the Gordon School of Theology. That evening he boarded a plane for the West Coast, where he began his preaching career.

As Dodds was signing his name for the kids, his coach, Jack Ryder, took out a handkerchief and hastily wiped a tear from his eye.

"The boy's mind is made up," he declared to a friend. "It's the first time in history a topnotcher has retired with his greatest races still in his system. He himself made the decision to retire. I would never try to influence him, one way or the other. My best goes with him."

As the 1945 indoor season rolled by, there was no Gil Dodds in the mile. There was no doubt about who would have won the races if he had competed, for no one beat 4:12—a loafing time for Dodds.

Well into his career of bringing the word of the Bible to the youth of the land, Dodds admitted

once or twice that he was tempted a little when the track season opened.

"But I'm not going back," he declared. "This is my life work; and although I'm just starting, I have seen proof that it's the right thing to do."

The Flying Parson thus passed from the American sport scene. For him there were no speeches, no flag-waving, no banquets, no cheering from admiring thousands. He slipped quietly away and entered his new profession. But though his going was quiet, it was not forgotten, nor will his deeds pale because of his absence. He made his mark, and could have inscribed it still more deeply. The world honors his choice.

GILBERT DODDS

1941

		Dodds' Time
NCAA Cross-Country	1st	20:32.1

1942 (Indoor)

Millrose AA	2 miles	2nd	8m 53.7s
Boston AA	2 miles	2nd	9:02.2
New York AC	2 miles	2nd	8:53.6
AAU	mile	1st	4:08.7 new rec.
New York KC	mile	2nd	4:08.8
Chicago Relays	2 miles	2nd	9:02.3
N. Y. War Relief	mile	2nd	4:08.6
Cleveland	mile	2nd	4:10.7

1942 (Outdoor)

IC4A Special	2 miles	2nd	9:08.8
New Eng. AAU	mile	1st	4:13 new rec.
AAU 1500 meters	1st		3:50.2
Passaic, N. J.	1½ miles	1st	8:00 Am. rec.
Sugar Bowl	mile	1st	4:13.2

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1943 (Indoor)

Millrose AA	mile	2nd	4:09.2
Boston AA	mile	4th	4:12.9
New York AC	mile	1st	4:08.8
AAU	mile	2nd	4:09.8
New York KC	mile	2nd	4:10.2
Chicago Relays	mile	1st	4:08.5
Cleveland	mile	1st	4:08.7

1943 (Outdoor)

New Eng. AAU	3 miles	1st	14:50 new rec.
New Eng. AAU	mile	1st	4:16.2
AAU 1500 meters		1st	3:50

(Gunder Haegg tour)

Chicago	2 miles	2nd	9:05.4
Los Angeles	2 miles	2nd	9:10.2
San Francisco	Mile	2nd	4:14.6
Harvard Stad.	Mile	2nd	4:06.5 Am. rec
Baldwin-Wallace, Ohio	Mile	3rd	4:06.1
New York City	Mile	2nd	4:07.2

1944 (Indoor)

Boston YMCA (24-lap track)	2 miles	1st	9:43.6 new rec.
Millrose AA	mile	1st	4:10.6
Boston AA	mile	1st	4:09.5 new rec
New York AC	mile	1st	4:08.0
AAU	mile	1st	4:08.3 new rec.
IC4A Special	mile	1st	4:10.2
New York KC	mile	1st	4:07.3
	(new world indoor record)		
New York KC	1000 yards	1st	2:11.2
Chicago Relays	mile	1st	4:06.4
	(new world indoor record)		
Cleveland	2 miles	1st	9:05.3

1945 (Indoor)

Boston YMCA (24-lap track)	2 miles	1st	9:58.4
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LIEUTENANT
THOMAS DUDLEY (TOM) HARMON

"No. 98"



LIEUTENANT THOMAS DUDLEY (TOM) HARMON

CHAPTER VIII

LIEUTENANT THOMAS DUDLEY (TOM) HARMON
"NO. 98"

THIS chapter opens not on the field of sports with thousands cheering and bands playing and athletes performing in bright and snappy uniforms. It opens, instead, in the hot and snake-infested swamps of a South American jungle, where a lone American airman struggled for life in April of 1943.

It is the story of Lieutenant Thomas Dudley Harmon, who was later awarded the Silver Star for gallantry in action against the planes of the Japanese during the great World War II.

The scene, as this chapter begins to unfold, finds Lieutenant Harmon deep in a South American jungle, pushing forward in the mires of the swamplands, determined to remain alive.

After seven days, Harmon finally emerged into a native settlement, scratched, exhausted, starved, but confident that it was his "football legs" and his faith in God that had saved his life.

"That time," said the lieutenant, "my football legs gave me the luckiest touchdown I ever scored."

It was a touchdown that actually spelled his life. So while this story does not open on an athletic note, it eventually harks back to the days of Harmon's football career at University of Michigan in 1938, '39, and '40, when his name was on the lips of every gridiron enthusiast in the land.

This story should show that the background of stamina and courage which Harmon built as a football hero at Michigan did not fail him in the lonesome jungles of South America.

That day in April of 1943 was the first time that Harmon was face to face with death. In December of 1943 he again came back from the limbo of lost men after being reported missing on October 30 on a dive-bombing attack on Kiukiang, a Chinese Yangtze River port. It was exactly thirty-two days later that Harmon returned to his base headquarters in China. He had been assigned to the 449th fighter squadron in China, where he was credited with shooting down two Japanese "Zero" fighter planes.

Of the two experiences, however, the worse one was the struggle of seven days and seven nights in the South American jungles. On this flight, the former all-American halfback was piloting a big

bomber when a rainstorm caught the ship over Dutch Guiana, and the engines started to "conk out."

Although it was night, Harmon ordered his five crewmates to take to their parachutes. The air was black and wet, and the instrument board was not working. It was a miracle that Harmon was saved, because he leaped from the plane at a level that could not have been more than four hundred feet. He came down fast and landed in the branches of a treetop.

Thoroughly shaken and deeply scratched from the branches, Tom started to descend from the tree. To add to his woes, a torrential downpour flooded the tropical night.

In the inky darkness he managed to find the wreckage of the plane. He stumbled over the bodies of two of his crewmates. Fumbling around in the jungle, still dizzy from his plummet through the air and his experience in the treetop, he salvaged a jungle knife, a pair of flares, four cans of water, and a compass.

His trembling hands searched for matches, and with his heart in his mouth he tested the compass.

A miracle! Or, perhaps, another miracle in the life of Thomas Dudley Harmon—the compass worked!

"I knew that the coast line was east of my position; and so I started east, determined to make it even though it might take me months to get there," Harmon recalled.

He started out. There were hills after hills. Between the hills were man-killing valleys filled with jungle undergrowth. In some places there were miles upon miles of dismal swamps, in which lurked vicious crocodiles.

Months? To another man it might have cost more than months. It might have cost life.

Three times during his first five days and five nights in that swamp Harmon encountered alligators and beat them off with a log. Once a crocodile, with a snap of his tail, sent the log spinning backward against Harmon's head with a smash that might have killed him.

Harmon described those swamps vividly:

"Expert swimming doesn't help in a jungle swamp full of tree stumps. Sprawling, clutching tree roots grab your feet. Vines and weeds cut your skin.

"I just felt my way through those swamps, carefully placing my feet. When I knew the depth was too much, I could only leap forward, praying to get onto higher land. Each time my prayer was answered."

During the second night in the jet-black jungle darkness, Harmon felt for his chocolate ration and found it was melted mush.

He reached for his cans of water and found that the crash of the airplane had opened small leaks and all his drinking water had dripped away.

Thereafter, until he conquered the jungle, he was without water and food—alone in a vast, vicious world of endless jungle and swamp that seemed entirely uninhabited by man.

Three times he found swiftly moving streams. Three times his all-consuming thirst forced him to travel miles from his eastward trudge to find the source of the streams so that he might drink unafraid of the poison that lurked in the water and the vegetation of this apparently God-forsaken green world.

After he had conquered each swamp, he found the undergrowth to be a vicious enemy. Time after time when he attempted to cut strong vines with his knife, the vines snapped back and ripped his face.

“Several times I lost my temper and howled and raged at the undergrowth and the vines. But I finally gained control, for I knew that if I lost my head, I would die. It was the greatest lesson in patience in my life.”

After five days, the lieutenant finally came to the biggest swamp he had seen.

"It must have been fifteen miles across—just reeking with heat and slime," he has said.

The sight of this morass almost cost him his life. It was the last straw. His discouragement almost made it impossible for him to move. With a bitter heart, he finally forced himself to turn from the eastward course that he had followed without deviation. He headed northeastward around the swamp's edge.

Finally, during the night, he stumbled over a path, marked by slashes in the trunks of trees.

At the sight of the path, Harmon collapsed on his face with relief, and, in pure relaxation, rested for some minutes with his face in the black, dank mush of the jungle dirt.

New strength came to him with the discovery of the path. He followed it for almost five worrisome miles, until he came to a sight that took his breath away. He looked again, and quick tears filled his eyes.

Bathed in moonlight before him was a hut, and the glory of it was as great as a house and lights could ever be at home.

Inside were a man, his wife, and two children.

"The man's name was Francois," says Harmon.

“He took me in and cared for me. I know great and little men. But I count Francois, a black man who could speak only French, as one of the great men I have met.”

Harmon was born in Gary, Indiana, in 1919, the son of Louis Harmon, a music teacher, and his wife, Rose. Harmon entered Michigan in 1937; and in 1939 and 1940 he was named as an All-America football back.

He was considered even greater than the fabulous Red Grange, since Harmon scored thirty-three touchdowns as a varsity player to Grange's thirty-one and gained a remarkable total of 2,134 yards as a varsity college player.

For a time after graduation he played as a professional; but an offer of \$13,500 to sign as a leading man in a Hollywood, California, motion picture studio caused him to quit the professional game. For a time he remained in pictures, but his heart's ambition was to become radio broadcaster with a Detroit, Michigan, station.

Then war broke out in December of 1941. Two months previously, on November 5, Harmon had enlisted as a cadet in the United States Army air forces and finally won his wings as a pilot in Arizona in October of 1942.

Of his experiences fighting Japanese fighter

planes over China on October 30, 1943, Harmon has said:

“Four American fighter planes, one of which I was piloting, went along as cover for four P-38 bomber planes to attack the docks at Kiukiang in China.

“Just as the bombers started their runs on the targets, a bunch of Japanese Zero planes appeared. I busted right into six of the Japanese planes.

“My first burst of fire cut off one of their cockpits. Then I let tracers and cannon go at another ship, and it splintered like a matchbox.

“I started searching around for trouble again, but trouble caught up with me first. All of a sudden something smashed into my armor plate. That was the first shell. The second one hit under my seat and the third between my legs.

“That third one almost tore off my clothes. It started a gasoline fire in the cockpit, and I started to spiral down at such speed that I was yanked right out of the plane. I opened my parachute and landed in a lake.

“Friendly Chinese took me in tow. For a month I traveled through China, hiding in native huts during the day and in the field at night. I was disguised as much as possible to look like a native.

“Most of the month I headed for my base

through territory controlled by the enemy. One false move might have meant my capture and possibly my death."

This was Tom Harmon. He was in vastly different circumstances since the days of 1940, when he was the toast of thousands of university undergraduates and multitudes of Michigan alumni and was voted the greatest football player of the year.

This was the Harmon, who, at the age of nineteen years—a six-foot youth of 194 pounds—flashed into the records with page after page of flaming gridiron history. He was hailed by metropolitan sports writers from the Pacific to the Atlantic as "Tornado Tom," "The Michigan Monsoon," "The Whirling Wolverine," and "The Gary Ghost."

This was the Harmon who one day during his senior year at Michigan performed such dazzling feats of gridiron wizardry for Michigan that Grantland Rice, the famous sports writer, started his story as follows:

"By the margin and magic of Harmon, the University of Michigan Wolverine express beat Pennsylvania, 14-0, as 59,913 spectators saw the matchless star carry his team to victory."

After the 1940 season, Harmon won the Heisman Memorial Trophy, which is given each year

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by the Downtown Athletic Club of New York City to the outstanding player of the season.

Harmon polled an unprecedented number of 1,303 votes, leading John Kimbrough of Texas Agricultural and Mining College, who received 841 ballots. It was Harmon who indisputably was tops among his rivals in the East, the Southeast, the Midwest, and on the Pacific Coast.

During his college days Harmon became so widely known that a football fan addressed a letter merely to "Mr. No. 98," the number Harmon wore on his jersey. The letter was delivered to the Michigan star at the Ann Arbor campus.

It was during the season of 1939 that Harmon first gained national fame as a football comet, when he became the leading scorer in the Big Ten Conference.

He played that season in five games and led in points with 61. He was also first in average yardage gained by rushing in each game with 88.8, and in average yardage by both passing and rushing with 167.6.

During that season the "Gary Galloper" surpassed in publicity the renowned Hal Hursh, forward passing wizard of the University of Indiana, another member of the Big Ten, and Nile Kinnick, the line-smashing lion and passing wizard of

the University of Iowa, who ground out an average of 90.6 in ground plays.

Harmon's color and flair for the spectacular made him the favorite hero of the thousands of football fans from coast to coast.

It was in 1939 that Harmon played one of his best remembered games before 53,719 spectators in the big University of Michigan stadium at Ann Arbor.

The Galloper scored three touchdowns; place-kicked three extra points; and established his right as a sophomore to a place in the Hall of Fame for Athletes by pacing the Wolverines to a 27-7 victory over Yale.

The story of that game is thrilling. With only negligible blocking from his mates, Harmon stormed eleven yards over Yale's forward line on a smash for the first score of the game; he contributed a 31-yard run to a 69-yard march that ended in a teammate's touchdown; he dived over from the one-yard line for another touchdown; and he then closed his day's blazing performance by whistling 59 yards for another touchdown.

The nineteen-year-old junior that day was a terrific football player. By his prowess alone the Big Blue eleven, making its first visit to Ann Arbor in eight years, was never in the ball game;

while the slick, co-ordinated Wolverine from Gary, Indiana, applied a full measure of his personal pressure.

Coach Herbert O. (Fritz) Crisler of Michigan, seldom one to single out a lone player for praise, forgot his usual reluctance to spotlight an individual one day after a 1939 game against Iowa. During that game Harmon scored four touchdowns, one on a 90-yard run, and kicked three goals to score all his team's points in a 27-7 victory.

Here in a nutshell was the performance of this widely heralded "Touchdown Tornado" that day against Iowa:

First period—tossed a 27-yard forward pass to Edward Frutig to take the ball to Iowa's two-yard line. From there he twisted over the goal line without an opponent's hand touching him.

Second period—threw an eleven-yard pass to Forrest Evashevski that carried the ball to Iowa's four-yard line. He again went over the goal-line for a touchdown, standing up and still untouched by an opposing tackler. He also went around Iowa's left end for 29 yards to the eight-yard line and then raced around right end for his third touchdown.

Third period—intercepted an Iowa forward pass on Michigan's ten-yard line and toe-danced

90 yards down the sidelines for his fourth and last touchdown.

Harmon made the three extra points after touchdowns, missing only after the second one.

Little wonder after this game that coach Crisler was inspired to say:

“Harmon has everything. He’s best known as a runner, but I’d say his blocking and defensive work are equally good. Iowa threatened only twice after scoring their only touchdown, and Harmon stopped both Iowa bids for additional scores. He has magnificent change of pace and can dodge and turn on a dime.”

It was also during the 1939 season that Michigan invaded Philadelphia to tackle a strong University of Pennsylvania team. Harmon contributed to a 19-0 victory by carrying the ball, running back punts, forward passing, and kicking points after touchdowns.

Of the 313 yards that Michigan gained that day against a rugged bunch of Quaker stars, Harmon registered 222 yards by his own rushes, including a spectacular touchdown run that was tabulated at 63 yards.

During the season of 1940, his last as a collegian, Harmon celebrated his twentieth birthday on September 28 at Berkeley, California, in a character-

istic manner. He stunned the University of California team with a 21-0 victory in the first appearance of a Michigan team on the western side of the Rocky Mountains in thirty-nine years.

A crowd of 35,000 saw Harmon that day split the California air as he ran 94 yards for a touchdown with the opening kick-off. He then further stunned the Californians with a punt-return of 72 yards for a second touchdown and with an 86-yard end run for a third score in the second half of the game.

Statistics disclosed that as a sophomore in Horace Mann High School at Gary, Indiana, where he was All-State halfback and the nation's leading schoolboy scorer, he lost only seven yards through the season, during which he completed 21 of 45 forward passes and had only one intercepted.

During one of his last games for the Wolverines against Michigan State in 1940, Harmon scored one touchdown, passed to teammate Forrest Evashevski for two more touchdowns, and set up a fourth with another aerial to Paul Kromer.

Such was the man and such was the background that produced courage and stamina more than equal to the dangers of the tropical jungles a few years later.

Harmon's wedding to Elyse Knox, a Hollywood

motion picture actress, on the morning of August 26, 1944, was an occasion to draw more than five hundred guests to the small St. Mary's student chapel on the University of Michigan campus.

In that same church, Harmon's seventy-year-old father, Louis; his mother, Rose; his two married sisters; his brothers, Harold and Louis, Jr.; and his brother, William, of the Air Corps, had twice prayed for his safety when he was missing in action after parachuting from his plane on those flights in Dutch Guiana and in China.

At the wedding the bride wore a gown of white silk made from Harmon's parachute, used when his plane cracked up in China. White silk cords from the seams of the 'chute constituted the trimmings of the gown.

The lieutenant met his bride shortly after his graduation, when a Hollywood agency disclosed that he had accepted a contract to make a picture. His teammate and gridiron blocker, Forrest Evashevski, captain of the 1940 team, was also slated to play a part in the film.

The Hollywood agency added that plans to sponsor a second film in which Harmon would act for a sum of \$17,500 had also been tentatively accepted by the football ace.

But war came, to snatch these riches from the

"Gary Ghost." He later told newspapermen that his entering the service would cost him between \$30,000 and \$50,000 a year, which he otherwise would have earned.

"But that's all right with me," he grinned. "When we finish this job against our enemies, it will be time to think of those things again."

Lieutenant Harmon was always keenly aware of the value of religion. In November, 1943, in a letter to the Rev. Francis McPhillips, chaplain of the Catholic Student Chapel at Ann Arbor, Harmon said that he had flown five hundred miles to attend a Sunday midnight Mass in China "because there was no church near our base."

The letter, printed in *The Pilot*, the publication of the Archdiocese of Boston, Massachusetts, then continued:

"If ever a man says he has no fear in combat, he is not telling the truth. But that one evening in church gave me more comfort, strength, and confidence than I've yet experienced in China.

"During a two-week assignment in India, the chaplain, not recognizing me, eulogized the religious faith that had carried 'Harmon' through the bomber crash last April in the Dutch Guiana jungles of South America."

For two years, ending in 1940, Harmon had

been the focal point of crowds numbering over 50,000 on each college football week-end and of their riotous enthusiasm.

Thus after that 1940 season of football, experts in psychology, sports, and other fields were agreed that as far as fan attraction was concerned, the name of Thomas Dudley Harmon should go down beside such famous names as John L. Sullivan, Jack Dempsey, Babe Ruth, Christy Mathewson, Ty Cobb, Charlie Brickley, Eddie Mahan, Red Grange, and Bill Tilden, as favorites of the crowds.

Dr. John M. Harmon, Director of Athletics at Boston University (and no relation to the Michigan Comet) attempted to explain the Michigan star's crowd-pull.

"Occasionally," he said, "you find a man who combines unusual confidence with great ability. Some people call it 'cockiness.' It seems to be the belief in the individual that he can do whatever is necessary and do it successfully.

"You see that in Harmon," he continued. "I talked with him once in Boston. His complete confidence was one of the things which impressed me. He is not at all affected, not conceited. In fact, he is very modest in his manner. However, he is absolutely sure of himself. That is a trait which appeals to crowds. From what I have seen

and heard, it is one which most of the great popular athletes have possessed.

“Another thing these men have in common is a love of their particular sport for its own sake, and a feeling that to them it is the most important thing in the world.

“You hear it said sometimes that certain athletes care for a sport only for what they get out of it. I doubt if that is ever true of men at the height of their ability. Eventually the love of the sport fades, if the man remains in it long enough, and it tends to become a matter of routine; but when that time comes, a man’s ability and his appeal to the crowd begin to fade also.

“Sincerity is another factor. No matter how large the crowd, it can sense whether a player is sincere. Showmanship is essential, but it must be, or at least seem to be, a natural showmanship. Crowds are very quick to sense anything ‘phony’ and to resent it.”

Dr. Howard L. Kingsley, specialist in educational psychology in Boston, had this explanation of the Harmon appeal:

“Most of this hero worship in the case of an athlete, and in other fields, I believe, is what psychologists call ‘identification.’ The spectators identify themselves with the individual player.

They see him doing something they would probably like to do, or, at least, something they admire; and they get some kind of vicarious satisfaction from it.

“Then, too, there is the satisfaction of watching a skillful performance and one possibly involving a degree of danger. The spectators admire the skill and courage involved. In the case of a great college star, the man often becomes a symbol of honor and glory to the college itself.”

James E. Cox, who served as athletic trainer at Harvard University and earlier at University of Kansas, pointed to the great runner, Glenn Cunningham, who was so badly burned as a boy that it was supposed he would be a cripple for life. Yet Cunningham recovered from those burns and finally became one of the greatest foot racers of all time.

“Cunningham was completely the serious type,” trainer Cox recalled. “He had the maximum of desire and determination. There were things about him, tricks he had on the track, which sometimes annoyed crowds; but they came to admire the fighting spirit which overcame his handicap.

“I think one explanation of Jack Dempsey’s appeal to the throngs of boxing fans was his complete ferocity. Anyone who has ever walked into a chair

in the darkness and then hauled off and kicked the chair, can identify something of his own instinct with what Dempsey felt in the prize ring."

Other psychologists contended that a great football hero must have a "proper setting, a huge stadium, big bands, and cheering sections to put a crowd in the right mood of enthusiasm to inspire the great athlete."

But in the man-killing jungle of Dutch Guiana, Lieutenant Harmon had no big bands or cheering sections to keep him going.

He was just a lonely man who had his football and United States Army training to fall back upon, physically, and his faith in his religion to fall back upon, spiritually. These kept him alive when he came to the shore of that last dreadful swamp. They kept him going after he had been forced down in China; and they will continue to keep him going.

MARTIN WHITFORD (MARTY) MARION

“Mr. Shortstop”



MARTIN WHITFORD (MARTY) MARION

CHAPTER IX

MARTIN WHITFORD (MARTY) · MARION
"MR. SHORTSTOP"

THE train bearing the St. Louis Cardinals rumbled through the countryside one day in 1942 as the club completed its first big eastern swing. A few of the boys were reading. A quartet was playing bridge. Others were discussing their latest ball games.

Off by himself a tall, serious-faced young man stretched out his long legs on the opposite seat and bent his head over a textbook on mechanical drawing. Once in a while he paused in his study to glance about him, his finger marking the place in the book. Suddenly he looked up to find Manager Billy Southworth eyeing him curiously.

"What's the idea?" asked Billy with a smile. "Going into the drafting business after the season?"

"Maybe sooner than that," the boy replied with a shake of his head. "I'm not staying in baseball if the best I can do is to be a .120 hitter."

Southworth's brows came together and he dropped into the opposite seat.

"Listen, son," he said, "I know you are having your troubles at the plate, but so are a lot of other fellows. Everyone hits a slump now and then. Wait until we get back to St. Louis before you become too discouraged. I have a few ideas which I think may help."

Back in St. Louis this player began following his manager's suggestions. He shifted his stance at the plate several times until he finally found one to his liking. His batting average slowly began to rise. Despite a start which found him hitting only a few points over .100 for a good share of the early season, he wound up with a presentable mark of .276. In addition he led the National League in doubles with 38.

That player who almost quit baseball was none other than Marty Marion, the fellow who not long afterwards was to be called, first, the best shortstop in the National League, and then the best short-fielder in both major leagues. Finally even old-timers began mentioning him in the same breath with the immortal Honus Wagner, which is the highest praise that any baseball player can receive.

That day on the train, however, Marion had

been serious about giving up the game. Innately honest, he sincerely thought his teammates would be better off with a shortstop who could make base hits ring off his bat more often. It wouldn't have taken much to make him hang up his spikes and his glove and go back to the drafting board he left after his freshman year at Georgia Tech.

That he did not is one of Billy Southworth's greatest joys. The quiet Cardinal boss, who almost never goes out on a limb, had this to say of Marion in midseason of 1944:

"He's the best shortstop I've ever seen, and he is the main reason why the Cardinals are as good as they are."

Praise for this lanky, gray-eyed, sandy-haired infielder does not stop with Southworth, however. Lippy Leo Durocher, the boss of the Brooklyn Dodgers, said simply and without equivocation, "He's the best in my time."

Casey Stengel of the Milwaukee Brewers and former manager of the Boston Braves was somewhat more voluble.

"That Marion puts out the fire in many a team's attack," he declared. "He covers so much ground and makes so many simple outs of what appeared to be hits that he breaks the spirit of the opposition. He'd be valuable if he never hit the ball.

Runs saved are just as good as runs scored, in my book."

And Connie Mack, the veteran manager of the Philadelphia Athletics, grew positively lyrical.

"That boy reminds me of Nap Lajoie, the way he fields," the venerable sage of the dugout declared after the World Series of 1944. "He's always moving in the right direction when the ball is hit, and he makes even the tough ones look easy. I never saw Wagner play, so I can truthfully say that Marion is the greatest shortstop that I have ever seen."

Considering that Mr. Mack has been around a good many years, the tribute is a large one.

Fortunate it was for Marion—his teammates call him "Slats"—that he did not drop out of the picture back in 1942, because since then he has seen his greatest days on the diamond. True, he has never batted above .300, but usually he has placed his hits where they counted, and his defensive play hasn't been equaled in many a moon.

Curiously enough, Marty made a flying start in the batter's box when he came up to the big leagues with St. Louis in 1940. In April of that year he made seven hits in seventeen at bats, and included in that group were three doubles. Then for a long stretch it seemed that he would never

become a hitter. His blows that went for hits would be occasional drives which happened to land just out of reach of the fielders.

One man never gave up on Marion's batting. He was the Cardinals' capable coach, Señor Miguel Angel Gonzalez, the Cuban who teaches the American game of baseball much better than he speaks the king's English.

"This Marion," he said, "she have plenty of power. She find big-league pitch not so hard to make hit if she watch careful and not swing at so many bad ball like she used to be. But she smart. She listen to Mike."

Since his indecision in 1942, Marion has played in three successive World Series and for two world's championship clubs. He was with the Cardinals when they defeated the New York Yankees; with them when they lost to the same New York club the following year; and still with Billy Southworth's gang when they won back the title from the St. Louis Browns in 1944.

Many observers have picked out more spectacular stars for their heroes of the World Series of 1944, but those who delve behind the scenes stick to Marion. In fact, during the whole of the 1944 season he was terrific. As early as August there was talk of his being awarded the Most Valuable

Player Trophy. Needless to say he did win the award, made annually by *The Sporting News*, the paper that is called the "bible of baseball."

Perhaps Durocher made the most illuminating comment on Marion's value to the Cards in the 1944 Series:

"If you had given Marion to the Browns and Vern Stephens to the Cards, the Browns would have won the Series," he said.

Marion and Stephens went into that Series with a couple of reputations to uphold. Marion not only upheld his but added stature to it. Stephens, unfortunately, slumped; and Marty's great play made the comparison between the two shortstops even greater.

The Cardinal star accepted twenty-nine chances without error, some of which were of the impossible variety. The Brownie shortstop had twenty-eight chances and came up with three errors, one of which was fatal. That error came in the sixth and final game, when Whitey Kurowski drove what should have been an easy double-play ball down to short. Stephens, however, threw badly to Don Gutteridge at second. All hands were safe, Walker Cooper scored on the play, and instead of having been retired, the Cards went on to score two more runs to settle the game.

To say that Marion is spectacular would be wrong. He doesn't go through contortions to field or throw a ball. He doesn't make headlong dives and throw from a sitting position. He just makes the routine look very simple. The difficult he makes seem easy; and the impossible he does with grace. He is businesslike, smooth, but above all, he is deadly.

In that '44 Series he snagged up grounders behind second, and he roamed behind third. Almost anything on the left side of the diamond was gobbled up by this defensive paragon. He seemed to move almost before the ball was hit, and never in the wrong direction.

Yet, if he was complimented on his play, his modesty would overcome him.

"I was lucky," he would say. "I just happened to be there. The ball was hit that way and I was moving that way. That's all there was to it."

Marion hates exaggeration. The story is told of how in 1943 his friends were recalling a boyhood accident in which he was supposed to have fallen from a cliff and so injured himself that he could not be accepted by the Army later on.

"Shucks," he said when asked about the accident. "That wasn't any cliff. It was just a little old mudbank."

As a matter of fact it was a twenty-foot embankment, and Marty suffered a compound fracture of the right leg. That was when he was only ten years old, and the wound required forty-four stitches. His leg was placed in a cast, and he could not walk for months. When the Army examined him in January of 1944, the doctors placed him in limited service, and after the baseball season he was still awaiting his call.

Comparing him to the great Wagner makes Marion uncomfortable. If it is done in his presence, he will shuffle and wriggle even more than he does during a game. He is probably one of the most fidgety men ever to play in major-league baseball.

Marion goes through more gyrations while awaiting a play at his shortstop's position than a bashful schoolboy giving a recitation. He pulls the peak of his cap, tightens his belt, kicks the dirt, picks up pebbles and tosses them over his shoulder, shouts to his teammates, and wipes his hands on his chest. He walks forward and backward and rubs his glove on his pants, but never once does his eye leave the batter. When the pitcher's arm starts downward, he's on his toes; and if the ball comes anywhere near him, he comes up with it.

"The Octopus," and "Mr. Shortstop," his club-

mates call Marty Marion, and he deserves both titles. It is as though his long arms are ready to sweep his side of the diamond clean, and he usually does. It could have been that the Browns despaired of putting any ball through his side of the infield in the 1944 World Series, for in the last two games they hit only four balls in his direction.

Marion is the tallest shortstop in the history of baseball, standing six feet, two inches. Because of his slim figure he looks even taller. Off the diamond he wears double-breasted suits to make him look heavier. His weight is listed at 175 pounds, but he usually has lost ten pounds or so by the time October rolls around. It was Burt Shotton, now coach of the Cleveland Indians, who hung the nickname "Slats" on Marty when Marion got his St. Louis tryout.

As a matter of fact, Marion became a shortstop by accident. He had played third base in high school. However, when Marion got to Columbus, Shotton found himself with eleven third basemen on his hands and no shortstops.

"Move over and play shortstop, Slats," he called; and Marion came up with a new name and a new position. He has been playing at shortstop ever since.

Martin Whitford Marion was born December

1, 1917, at Richburg, South Carolina, the son of a railroad man. When the boy was only sixteen months old, his family moved to Atlanta, Georgia, and Slats was an Atlantan for twenty years. He learned baseball on the sand lots and high school diamonds in the "cracker" capital.

Originally Marion did not intend to follow a career in baseball. He attended Technical High School in Atlanta, and though he liked to play ball, his thoughts were more concentrated on a college education and a foundation in mechanical drawing.

"I guess it was just one of those things," Marion declared. "A fellow who used to play on the Technical High team with me, Johnny Echols, read in the paper that the Cardinals were having a tryout at Rome run by Bill Walsingham, Sam Breadon's nephew. The affair was for only one day, but Johnny and I must have made some sort of an impression; for before we left, Mr. Walsingham offered both of us contracts."

Neither of the boys signed then. For one thing, Marty did not want to do anything without his parents' consent, and for another, he had made up his mind on going to Georgia Tech and majoring in drafting.

"We went home," Marion went on, "and didn't

think much more about it. Later in the summer, though, we got wires from Branch Rickey to come to St. Louis and work out with the Cardinals at the club's expense. That sounded like something adventurous, so we went."

The two Southern boys arrived in St. Louis at a time when the Cards were struggling with the Chicago Cubs and the New York Giants for the 1935 pennant. They suffered with Frankie Frisch as they watched the Cubs win twenty-one straight games in September and take the flag.

Echols signed; and although he went as high as Rochester in the International League, Class Double A baseball, he never reached the majors. Marion returned home to resume his schooling.

Not until the following winter, when Rickey's brother Frank made a special trip to Atlanta, did Marion sign with the Cardinal organization. Up to this time he had sincerely been considering a career in mechanical drawing and its associated fields. The contracts offered by the various Cardinal representatives had not been sufficient inducement to make him change his mind.

"Up to the time that Frank Rickey came to Atlanta," Marion later declared, "I had no thought of making baseball my profession. But once you've played baseball, it sort of gets into

your blood. At least I've never been sorry for my decision."

Marion finished out his year in Georgia Tech and then joined Huntington in the Middle Atlantic League in the late spring of 1936. His rise was steady, and he played only four years of minor-league baseball. In all his career he has had but three managers—Bennie Borgmann at Huntington, Ray Blades at Rochester, where he played from 1937 through 1939, and Billy Southworth with the Cardinals. At Huntington, when he was just eighteen years of age, he batted for .268 and hit nine home runs, his all-time high in organized baseball.

As yet Marion has never hit the charmed .300 circle in batting. His major-league marks since his first year in 1940 have been .278, .252, .276, .280, and .269. No Ruth or Cronin at the plate, yet Marty usually got his base hits when they counted. His thirty-eight doubles led his league in 1942, and he batted in sixty-four runs in 1944.

In the World Series of 1943 Marion was the leading batter with a .357 average in five games. His third-inning 320-foot home run into the left-field stands helped Pitcher Morton Cooper, whose father had died that morning, to the Cardinals' only victory.

Marty's World Series money and his steadily increasing salary from the Cardinals have not been sitting idle. The elongated shortstop invested in a 130-acre farm at Antreville, South Carolina, where his parents originally hailed from. Today his father raises cotton and tends a herd of fine cattle, and after the baseball season Marty hurries home to help with the chores.

After playing one year at Huntington and one at Rochester, Marion married Mary Dallas on December 27, 1937. They have one daughter, Martinna, who is around four years of age.

Like many other players in big-league baseball, Marion came from a baseball playing family. His father and three brothers either were or still are ball players.

"In his prime, dad played shortstop in the Southeastern League," Marty declared. "One brother, John Wyeth, who is five years older than I, was an outfielder with the Washington Senators for half of 1943, and he spent 1944 with St. Paul.

"Roy, also a shortstop, was with Nashville before entering the Army and going overseas. And Charley, the youngest in the family, was just breaking into baseball when he joined the Navy Air Corps."

All of the family look up to Marty, and like the

rest of the fans, they never tire of seeing him play.

Marion's favorite fielding play, incidentally, is the slow bounder. He makes a point of timing his steps to the bounce and speed of the ball, and his whole action from the time he starts until he delivers his throw is one of beauty and grace.

Mechanically Marion is perfect. He makes errors on occasion, of course, but his miscues are few and far between. When he takes a throw from the outfield, he always has his feet in the correct position for a throw to the proper base. More than once his footwork has meant the difference between an out for the Cardinals and an extra-base hit for their opponents. When he takes a throw at second base, he is always on the right side of the bag to tag the runner.

In late years in the National League there has been some argument as to which is the better shortstop, Marty Marion or Eddie Miller of the Cincinnati Reds. Marion, it has been said, gets more acclaim because of his stature, which makes most everything he does stand out like red flannels on a clothesline. Miller, on the other hand, has accepted as many chances as Marty, if not more, but has failed to impress the fans because of his sheer efficiency.

The question is a moot one and involves many

angles, too many, in fact, to allow rabid rooters ever to settle their differences. But just ask baseball men generally, men who look at a player merely in the light of his value to his team, and they will say "Marion" almost every time.

Marty has his own theories on baseball. He contends that no player can be taught to be a good infielder.

"To be a good infielder," he maintains, "a player must have that extra sense which makes him move with the ball. He must have it to begin with. He can never acquire it.

"I believe that an infielder can be converted into an outfielder," he says, "but an outfielder has a terrific job on his hands when he tries to become an infielder. If you don't believe it, just try to name some outer gardeners who have made good in the infield."

Despite the fact that Marion is sitting very comfortably in baseball's easy armchair and has many lucrative years ahead of him, the twenty-seven-year-old star is already making plans for the future. He knows the day will come when he no longer can gobble up those sizzling grounders back of second, and when drives that he would turn into outs today become base hits or errors through his position.

His drafting board is never far out of reach, and fiddling around with it is one of his chief diversions. Should he ever have to, he could step right out as a draftsman; and he would find many an outlet for his plans.

Until such time Marion will go his inimitable way, breaking the hearts of the opposition and thrilling the baseball world with his exploits.

"Marion is superlative," said Durocher on one occasion.

"The guy just isn't human," wailed Frankie Frisch of the Pirates, on another. "You can't get anything past him."

"Shucks, I'm just lucky," stubbornly maintains Mr. Shortstop. "On a lot of plays I even surprise myself."

"Describe him any way you wish," says Billy Southworth. "I'll take Marion, every time."

MARTIN WHITFORD MARION

Born December 1, 1917, at Richburg, South Carolina. Height, 6.02.
Weight, 175. Gray eyes and sandy hair. Throws and bats right-handed.

Year	Club	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1936	Huntington	Mid. Atl.	130	511	80	137	26	3	9	75	.268
1937	Rochester	Int.	142	479	73	118	21	3	4	37	.246
1938	Rochester	Int.	109	337	32	84	15	2	2	21	.249
1939	Rochester	Int.	128	437	66	119	12	5	5	53	.272
1940	St. Louis	Nat.	125	435	44	121	18	1	3	46	.278
1941	St. Louis	Nat.	155	547	50	138	22	3	3	58	.252
1942	St. Louis	Nat.	147	485	66	134	38	5	0	54	.276
1943	St. Louis	Nat.	129	418	38	117	15	3	1	52	.280
1944	St. Louis	Nat.	144	506	50	135	26	2	6	63	.267

Major League Totals	700	2391	248	645	119	14	13	273	.270
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WORLD SERIES RECORD

1942	St. Louis	Nat.	5	18	2	2	0	1	0	3	.111
1943	St. Louis	Nat.	5	14	1	5	2	0	1	2	.357
1944	St. Louis	Nat.	6	22	1	5	3	0	0	2	.227

World Series Totals	16	54	4	12	5	1	1	7	.222
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ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

1943	National	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
1944	National	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	.000
		5	1	0	0	0	0	0	.000

JOHN BYRON NELSON

“Golf’s Perfectionist”



JOHN BYRON NELSON

CHAPTER X

JOHN BYRON NELSON
"GOLF'S PERFECTIONIST"

HIS final putt dropped with a reassuring thud in the All-American golf championship of August, 1944, and Byron Nelson let a broad smile crease his chubby face.

Altogether he could not be blamed for that smile, for it made him the richest winner for one year in all golf history. Not only that, but he also had won golf's record first prize, the tidy sum of \$13,000 in War Bonds.

"That was one tournament I really wanted to win," Nelson declared later. "Not just because of the money," he grinned, "but because I consider Chicago's Tam O'Shanter course one of the toughest in the country, and I was determined to take it apart."

Byron did just that. As a matter of fact, he had to, for he was playing against a group of top-notch golfers who not only were eying that succulent

\$13,000, but who knew that Nelson was the man to beat.

Nelson was up against the best golfers it was possible to assemble under wartime conditions. No less than eight former United States open champions were ready to tee off, in addition to all the topnotchers available in this country and Canada. To make his cup full, he was made a top favorite along with handsome Harold "Jug" McSpaden of Philadelphia.

The odds were great, but the Texas-born, easy-playing Nelson merely thrust out his chin, a characteristic gesture when trouble is in sight. The result? He was behind only once—when his sub-par 68 placed him second to Atlanta's Johnny Bulla and his dazzling 65. In the second round Nelson forged to the front and stayed there. The chips were down and Lord Byron of the Links came through.

The ability to come from behind, to play his best when the going is toughest, is probably the greatest attribute of this quick-striding, ruddy-cheeked star, who in the space of a dozen years rose from caddie ranks to the pinnacle of golfing success. In countless tournaments he has seemingly been out of the running, only to thrust his button nose right back into the contention and carry

through to victory. The habit started when he was young.

Two youngsters trudged side by side along the fairways of the Glen Garden Golf Club in Fort Worth one day in 1924. One was the twelve-year-old Nelson and the other, Ben Hogan, later to become famous as golf's leading money-winner until he went into the United States armed forces. It was "Caddie Day" at the club and the two lads were playing off for the bag-toters' title.

"I remember how intense Ben and I were," Nelson recalled with his slight Texas drawl. "It was the first big affair for both of us. We battled on even terms for nine holes and each had a 40.

"Another nine was ordered and again we matched shot for shot until the final green. There I was lucky enough to sink a long putt for a 39 to beat Ben by a stroke."

The mashie he won was his first prize in golf.

From that first trophy Nelson has gone on to golf's greatest triumphs. He has won the United States Open championship, the National Professional Golfers' Association championship, the All-American championship at Chicago three years out of four, the Western Open, the North-South championship, and countless other sectional and local titles. He has been a member of the U. S.

Ryder Cup team, one of pro golf's highest honors, and the only time he had a chance to play in the British Open, he finished fifth. And to cap it all he was named the Athlete of the Year in the 1944 Associated Press poll, succeeding Gunder Haegg, the Swedish runner, who won in 1943.

All this has been a long road for the quiet Southwesterner to travel, but his many honors rest lightly on his head. He remembers too well his early days as a golf professional, when his first purse was a paltry seventy-five dollars, and when the fruits of his first venture to the California golfing circuit showed a net \$12.50, the last prize in the Los Angeles Open of 1933.

John Byron Nelson comes from deep in the heart of Texas, the same part of the country which produced not only himself and Hogan, but such other golfing greats as Ralph Guldahl, Gus Moreland, Jimmy Demaret, and the Mangrum brothers, Ray and Lloyd. He was born at Fort Worth on February 4, 1912, of Scotch-English descent, a hereditary combination that evidently gave him both his love for golf and his determination to fight every step of the way to win.

Like many topnotchers, he learned the rudiments of the game early—caddying on the fairways and courses of his native Texas. When he

grew older and needed more money than bag-toting brought in, he got a job as an office boy and later as a file clerk with the Fort Worth and Denver City Railroad. Practice came after working hours, and at five every evening he hopped a street car to hustle to the club.

It took dogged effort to keep going, for golf in those days was all work and little fun. Having no money to hire caddies to chase his shots, Byron hiked after the balls himself. In order to get in more practice shots before dark and to save himself from walking too far, he used his irons more than his woods. This undoubtedly accounts for the fact that Nelson is considered one of the greatest masters of iron shots in golf history and partially explains his own fondness for those clubs.

Occasionally Nelson's mastery of irons borders on the miraculous. He is never far off line with them, but fans following him when he won the U. S. Open title at Philadelphia were amazed by his hair-trigger accuracy. On no less than six occasions he hit the pin from anywhere up to 200 yards and with clubs all the way from his favored No. 1 to the wedge.

In appearance Nelson has nice features, a quick smile, brown hair, and sparkling blue eyes that are always ready to laugh. His sense of humor is keen,

and he is never averse to pulling a good joke on himself.

Take the 1939 P.G.A. championship final at Pomonok Country Club, New York. Nelson and Henry Picard had tied at the end of the regulation 36 holes and had gone into sudden-death play. Each reached the 37th green in two shots, Picard's ball resting eight feet from the cup and Nelson's six feet.

Picard had to putt first. He sighted his line from all angles, and then stroked the ball straight into the cup for a birdie. That meant that Byron had to sink his own six-footer to stay in the match. His sense of humor never deserted him. Turning to the tense gallery, he asked with a quizzical smile:

"Would anyone like to putt this one for me?"

No one seemed inclined to try, so Nelson bent over the ball, tapped it firmly, and headed it right for the hole. It veered wide at the last moment because of the grain of the grass!

"Such is life for the golfer," mourns Nelson when telling the story.

Nelson's sportsmanship on the course is well known, and spectators enjoy watching him play. His fellow professionals like to play in his company, for he wastes little time between strokes.

Frequently he carries a tee stuck behind his ear, and often he nibbles candy.

"Holdovers from my office-boy and file-clerk days in Fort Worth, I guess," says Byron when pressed for an explanation.

The world of golf has been good to Nelson. Outside of his earnings as a teaching pro at his present lucrative post at the Inverness Club of Toledo, Ohio, he has won more than \$60,000 in prize money. Nelson ran his winnings to more than \$45,000 in War Bonds in 1944 alone, making him the greatest money-winner in one year of all time. Sam Snead held the previous record, the West Virginia hillbilly pocketing \$19,600 when he won tournament after tournament in 1938. In 1944 Nelson averaged less than 70 strokes for 78 rounds of big-time golf.

There were times, however, soon after Nelson turned professional, when he probably wished he were back in some ordinary job in Fort Worth, perhaps with the bankers' magazine with which he became affiliated when the depression hit the railroad. It was this minor job with the magazine, however, which really started him on the road to golfing greatness, for it allowed him more time for the game.

Nelson thought he was first ready for the big

time in 1931, when he tried the National Amateur championship at Chicago. He failed to qualify, because he had been accustomed to the hard, dry courses of Texas, and although he once drove a golf ball 414 yards off a tee back home, he could not get the ball off the lush grass at Chicago's Beverly Country Club. At that, he missed qualifying by merely one stroke.

Undiscouraged by his failure, plus the fact that 1931 saw few jobs open to ambitious young men, Byron decided to earn his living at tournament golf. His initial starts were more than discouraging, though, and he finally settled down to a teaching professional's job at the Texarkana Club in Arkansas. The following few years he played in as many tournaments as he could, winning slightly more than \$900 in 1934 and increasing this to better than \$2700 in 1935—three times as much as the year before.

During these early years, both as an earnest amateur and a struggling pro, Nelson came in contact with three men who gradually made him over into the stylist he is today. Ted Longworth, pro at Glen Garden where Byron was playing in 1928, advised the future star to shorten his backswing, and Nelson finally worked into the three-quarter swing which made him champion.

When Nelson first became pro at Texarkana, a member, Mr. J. K. Wadley, took it upon himself to correct his stance, which was originally quite close, the right foot back of the left. The change was to a square stance on longer shots and a slightly open one on the shorter.

“The change was really quite simple,” Nelson declared, “but it made a world of difference in my game.”

The third man to tinker with Byron's game was George Jacobus, P.G.A. President from 1933-39. In 1935, Jacobus was serving as pro at the Ridgewood, N. J., Country Club and he took the young Nelson on as his assistant. Analyzing his helper's game one day, he found Nelson's swing to be very flat, a condition he changed to upright by getting Byron's hands considerably higher at the top of the backswing.

By this time Nelson was definitely ready for the big circuit, and he proved it by winning his first major tournament, the Metropolitan (New York) Open of 1936. From this point on, Lord Byron was off to the races.

His ability to come from behind made itself apparent soon after he found himself in the Met tourney. In the 1937 Masters' tournament at Augusta, Georgia, one of golf's blue ribbon affairs

curtailed by the war, big Ralph Guldahl was already in the clubhouse accepting congratulations for his fine 285.

The well-wishers were premature. Byron set sail on his final lap, passed Guldahl's total, and won the tournament with a 72-hole total of 283. His finish was the talk of the golf world for some time, for at the end of 63 holes Byron was four strokes off the pace. He birdied the 64th, parred the 65th, deuced the 66th, and got himself an eagle on the 67th, to make up six strokes and give him his two-stroke winning margin.

That same year saw Nelson winning the \$12,000 match play tournament at Belmont, Massachusetts, going to England with the Ryder Cup team, and capturing the qualifying medal in the annual P.G.A. championship. He calls 1938 an off-year, especially since he finished fifth in the National Open at Denver after taking a 9 on one hole and a 7 on another.

"That British Open is the next tournament I want to win," he says now. "When I've added that one to my trophies, I'll consider my golfing career is well rounded."

In 1939 Nelson had his biggest year to date. He won the U. S. Open title, the North and South championship, was runner-up in the P.G.A. cham-

pionship, captured the Western Open, and was awarded the Vardon Trophy for low scoring over the entire year. He was also a member of the Ryder Cup team.

In 1940, he won the P.G.A. title and in this tournament continued his unequalled stretch, which finally covered a six-year span. From runner-up in 1939, he went to the crown in 1940, the final round in 1941—losing out only when he missed a 42-inch putt on the 38th green—the semi-finals in 1942 and the final round in 1944. There was no tourney in 1943. Byron is the Augusta Masters' champion for the duration, having won the last championship there in 1942.

In 1944 Nelson went on a scoring rampage. Through 65 competitive rounds on courses all over the country, he had the best low average in history for so many rounds: 69.26 for each 18 holes.

Tommy Armour, the Silver Scot who with Walter Hagen is the only man ever to win the British Open, Canadian Open, Western Open, French Open, National P.G.A. championship, and the Metropolitan Open in his career, has this to say of the Stylist of Inverness:

“Walter Hagen could hit every and any shot, but this Nelson—he has more shots in his bag

than any man I ever saw. If he had just the unrestrained temperament of Hagen, he'd never lose a tournament."

Nelson, however, is far from having Hagen's unrestrained temperament. He laughs now at the Great Haig's antics—such as the time when he rode up to the first tee in a taxi, got out, and started playing dressed in a Tuxedo and pumps—but he would no more copy them than concede an opponent a 50-foot putt. He couldn't, for the bizarre is just not in his make-up.

In a way, this inability of Nelson's to copy Hagen is odd, for Walter was young Byron's boyhood hero. As a lad of fifteen, he watched the Haig's every stroke when he won his fifth P.G.A. championship and his fourth in a row in the 1927 tournament at Cedar Crest Country Club in Dallas, Texas. He even tried to emulate the master in his swing. Yet there was too great a variance in their natures for one ever to be like the other. Their differences cropped out when Nelson started his famous argument over the relative merits of match and medal play, right after the '44 P.G.A. championship at Spokane, Washington.

"Match play isn't a true test of golf," Nelson maintained, "because an inferior player can suddenly get hot in one round and put out the best

golfer in the world. It has happened before, too many times to count. At medal play a golfer must be on top of his game every round, and his total strokes are the exact record of his golf."

It was only natural that Hagen should defend match play, for much of his success came at that brand of golf. He took the P.G.A. title five times altogether, and in special matches for big money through the years, he won more than his share. Not that he could not play medal golf—he won the U. S. Open twice and the British Open four times.

Hagen's argument is that match play is a true test "because two golfers are out there under exactly the same conditions. If it hails on you," he declared, "it hails on your opponent. The only breaks you get are the ones you make.

"At medal play, one fellow may get around in perfect weather, and another have to battle through a storm. At medal play, when a guy gets hot, he has his playing partners helping him all they can in an attempt to bring home a winner. At match play, your playing partner is against you all the way and you are on your own."

Nelson's views, on the other hand, are equally sound, and they are given further credence when it is considered that many of his fellow pros agree with him, including such standout performers as

Craig Wood, the duration National Open Champion, and Ed Dudley, P.G.A. President.

Nelson, in reality, did not have to utter a single word in proof of his argument. The 1944 P.G.A. championship did it for him. Had that tournament been played on a medal-play basis, Nelson would have won by the proverbial country mile. He was 30 strokes under par for the 196 holes he had to play. Bob Hamilton of Indiana, the winner, was just an even dozen strokes under par for 205 holes. The story tells itself.

Byron Nelson failed to win that championship at Spokane, Washington. Perhaps he took his final-round opponent too lightly. More likely it was because there was not enough pressure on him. Unless Byron has a good crisis staring him in the face, he is apt not to play his best.

Back in the semifinals of the 1942 National P.G.A. championship, Nelson failed because he took things too easily. One up on Jim Turnesa, he had reached the 36th green in two strokes and had dribbled his first putt to within 20 inches of the cup. Turnesa holed out in four, and all Nelson had to do to win the match and enter the final round for the fourth year in a row was to sink that little putt. He gave the ball a light tap—but the ball did not even hit the rim of the cup. Turnesa

got a new lease on life and won the match at the first extra hole. Had that putt of Nelson's been upwards of 15 or 20 feet, no one in the gallery would have bet against his chances of making it.

It just seems that Lord Byron must feel pressure. Take that time in the Masters' championship in 1942, for example. Nelson was eight strokes ahead of his nearest rival, Ben Hogan, at the end of the first 36 holes. No pressure—so he eased off and little Ben came charging to a tie with Byron at 280 for the full 72-hole route.

Consequently the two Texans—eighteen years after their first play-off back at Glen Garden in Fort Worth—met in another man-to-man battle.

“This is more like it,” Byron said to himself as he stepped to the first tee. He could feel the pressure. This was competition.

He felt it even more when he landed his first drive in a scrub pine, had to play a safety shot, and finally wound up with a six to Hogan's four. At the end of five holes, Hogan had boosted his margin to three strokes, and many of the onlookers were counting Nelson out.

But the only thing out about Byron was his chin. The more he gets into trouble, the farther out it goes, and this time it was way out. He birdied the 185-yard fourth hole, while Hogan

went one over par, and gained back two strokes. They halved the seventh. At the eighth hole, a par-five uphill affair, Nelson tied two great wood shots together to land his ball five feet from the cup. He sank the putt for an eagle 3 while Hogan was getting down in a regulation 5. That put Nelson one stroke up, but the Toledo specialist was not through. He birdied the next three holes in a row to settle the matter and waltz to his second Masters' title.

In his previous play-off with Hogan, Nelson had won a golf club. This time he pocketed \$1,500.

Perhaps the most famous of all the Nelson crises was the one which confronted him in the National Open of 1939 at Philadelphia. He finished the first half of the tournament with a 36-hole total of 145, six strokes behind the leader and with 14 good golfers in between. At the three-quarter mark Byron's 71 had made up just one stroke, but his final round 68 brought him home into a first-place tie with Craig Wood and Denny Shute. That was the tournament, it will be remembered, which Sam Snead had practically in his pocket, only to card a duffer's 8 on the final par-5 hole to put him even out of the play-off.

Nelson, Wood, and Shute began the play-off,

with Denny fading fast before the dazzling 68's tossed at him by Nelson and Wood. Here again, however, Byron had to call upon his courage, for he came to the final hole one stroke behind Wood, who smelled the title and was hot after it. The 18th was a long hole, 558 yards. Both put their drives down the middle, with Wood a dozen yards in front. Nelson hit a great spoon shot to the edge of the green. Wood used a No. 4 wood and unfortunately hooked it, catching a spectator and knocking him out. His ball came to rest on the fairway 40 yards from the green.

Craig pitched six feet beyond the cup and Byron chipped eight feet past. Nelson had to can his putt and Wood had to miss his for the Toledo ace to stay in the running—and that is exactly what happened. Another play-off was ordered, and this time Nelson left no doubt as to the outcome. On the 458-yard fourth hole, playing through a blustery cross wind, Byron whipped his second shot—a full No. 1 iron—225 yards into the cup for an eagle and a lead that meant the championship. Nelson carded a 70 and Wood a 73.

Often Nelson has been asked what he regards as the toughest shot in golf. He invariably replies, "The five-foot putt." Like all topnotchers, Byron has missed those five-footers; in fact, he has

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missed many much shorter. But those 60-inch affairs are delicate, calling for everything but strength.

"If you miss one, you are bothered for several strokes," he contends, "even the next putt, of whatever length it is. Sink those five-footers consistently and your score automatically comes down."

Nelson maintains that the five most important factors in playing golf are patience, stamina, coolness, courage, and competitive urge. That about takes care of everything except the ability to play the shots.

Still in his early thirties, Nelson might have been thought prime material for the armed forces, and so he was, except for one unfortunate malady which made his exemption automatic. He bleeds too easily and too profusely from small cuts and abrasions, a condition that service doctors do not permit in men whom they accept.

Consequently, Nelson was rejected when he tried to enlist in December of 1942. He began doing the next best thing by giving his time to servicemen and to the Government. In 1943 alone, he appeared in nearly 100 tournaments for the benefit of the Red Cross, the USO, and in bond-selling campaigns.

In any tournament he enters Byron Nelson is considered one of the favorites, if not the big favorite. Through tournament after tournament he has justified this high regard, which is freely given by the best judges on the subject—his fellow professionals. In September of 1943 they gave him an even greater mark of esteem, when fifteen of them—voting for the country's most outstanding golfer—gave Byron Nelson every single vote.

Nelson is typically American in his play and in his sportsmanship. He is never beaten until the last shot has been fired. He is never discouraged by a poor start. He is always apt to pull himself up by his bootstraps when the outlook is darkest. He is a good winner and a good loser.

"How's Nelson doing?" has become the spectators' chant on the golf course. "As Maine goes so goes the Nation," is resolved in Byron's case into "As Nelson goes, so goes the prize money." The top prize usually goes to Lord Byron.

To list all of Nelson's accomplishments on the golf links of the world would take too much space, so in the interests of brevity we are listing only his major victories and championship activities for the year 1944, during which he set an all-time record for money winnings and became the Athlete of the Year.

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JOHN BYRON NELSON

Born February 4, 1912, at Fort Worth, Texas.

RECORD FOR 1944

TOURNAMENT VICTORIES

Event	Score
San Francisco Open.....	275
Knoxville Open.....	270
New York Red Cross Tourney.....	275
Tam-O'Shanter Open.....	280
Nashville Open.....	269
Dallas Open.....	276
Beverly Hills Open.....	277
San Francisco Open.....	281

In addition to these victories, Nelson was second in six other tournaments, third in five, fourth once, and sixth once. He played in 22 tournaments altogether in 1944, and he averaged 69.61 for 81 tournament rounds. With Harold (Jug) McSpaden he won the Golden Valley Four-Ball Tournament. He was medalist in the Professional Golfers' Association championship at Spokane, Washington, with 138, and runner-up in the championship.

Through 1944 Nelson had finished in the money in 64 consecutive tournaments. He previously had failed to finish in the money in January, 1940, at the Bing Crosby Tournament, when he was eleventh.

WILLIAM BECK (BILL) NICHOLSON

“The Cubs’ Power Hitter”



WILLIAM BECK (BILL) NICHOLSON

CHAPTER XI

WILLIAM BECK (BILL) NICHOLSON
"THE CUBS' POWER HITTER"

BILLY NICHOLSON squatted on the top step of the National League team's dugout in the All-Star game of 1944, a baseball bat gripped tightly in his powerful hands. As inning after inning went by and the American Leaguers pulled away to a 1-0 lead, he nervously twisted the bludgeon and banged it upon the steps.

At that time Nicholson wasn't even in the game. Came the last of the fifth, and his side was at bat. After one out, he watched Connie Ryan reach second base. Suddenly he heard his name called.

"Nicholson!" barked the National League outfit's manager, Billy Southworth. "Pinch hit for Raffensberger!"

Nicholson grabbed another bat hurriedly and swung the two of them in a high arc over his head as he hurried toward the plate. In his mind one idea was paramount—to hit the ball. But other

thoughts kept crowding in as he stopped to pick up the resin bag.

"You've got to come through this time, Nicholson," he told himself. "You've been in three All-Star games before; and what have you got to show for it? No hits in five at bats! This time is going to be different."

Competently the big six-foot 200-pounder with the shoulders of a lumberjack took his stance in the batter's box. He held his war club high over his left shoulder and stared intently out to the mound, where Tex Hughson, ace of the Boston Red Sox mound staff, was getting ready to pitch.

The Chicago Cubs' regular right fielder did not wait long to prove himself. He cracked a sharp double down the right-field foul line at Pittsburgh's Forbes Field, sending Ryan home from second and lighting the fuse for a four-run rally that won the game.

"I guess that was my biggest thrill in baseball," Nicholson said later. "I certainly had to wait a long time for that first All-Star hit."

That thrill, however, was only one of many for the Maryland slugger, whose tremendous swing, accurate eyesight, and perfect timing made him the National League's outstanding power hitter.

Nicholson hails from Chestertown, Maryland,

the same section of the eastern seaboard that has produced some other famous stars of the diamond. There are Frank (Home-Run) Baker of the old Philadelphia Athletics, home-run hero of the 1911 World Series; husky Jimmie Foxx, of the Athletics and Red Sox, twice American League batting champion, once major-league hitting leader, and four times major-league home-run king; and Charley Keller, famed New York Yankee slugger. Nicholson is following closely in the steps of his illustrious predecessors.

He led the senior circuit in homers (twenty-nine) and in runs-batted-in (128) in 1943. He then repeated these two championships with thirty-three homers and 120 runs-batted-in during the season of 1944.

Thus Nicholson became the first National Leaguer ever to lead in those two departments for two successive years since runs-batted-in began to be counted officially in 1920. And in 1944, Nicholson also showed the way with 116 runs scored, three more than the total scored by the National League's Most Valuable Player of the season, Marty Marion of the St. Louis Cardinals.

William Beck Nicholson, whose friends all call him "Nick" rather than "Billy," was born December 11, 1915, in Chestertown, which he still calls

home. He comes of Scotch-English parents, Earl and Alverta Nicholson. They weren't quite sure they liked the nickname "Swish" which for a while was tagged to their son because of the way his big batting mace moves through the ozone. His parents, however, have had no fault to find with his progress in baseball.

Nicholson has been a star in athletics ever since his high school days, and even then he could pole a long ball in baseball. Athletics, however, while still dear to his heart, were not his life's ambition. But for the fact that he is color-blind, today he might be commanding some Navy ship on one of the seven seas.

"When I was a kid," he declared, "I wanted to go to Annapolis more than anything else in the world. I read Navy books, and I suppose I was as salty a kid as there was in Maryland. I liked mathematics and got good marks, and I had my appointment to the Academy. It really hurt when they turned me down because of my eyes."

In high school in Chestertown, Nicholson batted cleanup on the baseball team for two years. The second year he helped the team win the Maryland Eastern Shore championship. He was also a guard on the basketball team and a halfback on the soccer team. If his high school had had a foot-

ball eleven, brown-haired, brown-eyed Nick would probably have been a star fullback.

Except for his professional baseball experience, all of Nicholson's life has been spent in Chestertown, a village of which he is innately proud, and which is just as proud of him.

"Nicholson?" the townspeople will say with a smile whenever his name is mentioned. "Sure—he's our boy."

After high school Nick went to little Washington College in Chestertown, an institution with an enrollment of some four hundred students. He quickly became one of its greatest athletic stars. He won four letters in football, four in baseball, and three in basketball. On the gridiron he was Washington's high scorer every year; and during his last two seasons he was picked as All-State fullback.

In much the same fashion as Home-Run Baker and Jimmie Foxx were snapped up by the Athletics, Nicholson joined Connie Mack's aggregation right after his graduation from college in 1936.

"That was too long a jump," he declared after he had made good with the Cubs later on. "I really wasn't ready for the step from college baseball to the majors. Mr. Mack just used me as a

pinch hitter in a dozen games before he decided to farm me out."

During the next couple of years he played with Oklahoma City in the Texas League, Portsmouth in the Piedmont League, and Williamsport in the New York-Penn circuit, before hitting his final minor-league club in Chattanooga of the Southern Association.

With the Chattanooga Lookouts Billy got his great opportunity, and he came through with such an outstanding performance that he was bought by the Cubs for \$35,000 and one player.

When the sale was made on June 25, 1939, Nicholson was leading the Southern loop in nearly all departments of the game. His batting average then was a cool .361, although it later slumped to .334 by July 23, the date he left to join Chicago. His home-run total of 23 was so far ahead of all other competitors in the association that when the season came to an end, he was still the great home-run champion.

"The news that I had been sold to a major-league club was like a shot in the arm to me," Nicholson recalled. "The day after it was announced, I hit two homers and a double in three times at bat, and drove in four runs."

That exhibition of power, incidentally, changed

what would have been a close game with New Orleans into a 6-2 victory for Chattanooga.

One of the most popular players both with his teammates and with Chattanooga fans, Nick was given several farewell gifts on July 23, his final appearance with the Lookouts. A barrel was placed under the grandstand, the fans responded by chipping in their donations, and a collection amounting to about seventy-five dollars was realized. Nick's clubmates gave him a traveling bag, and the Chattanooga front office presented him with a watch.

Impressed and grateful, Nick responded by scoring five runs and driving out his twenty-third home run of the season for a mark that other Southern Association sluggers failed to match in the remaining fifty games of the schedule for that season.

"I had had plenty of thrills and interesting experiences in the minors," Nicholson said, "but up to that time, none matched my first game with the Cubs. That was on August 1, when Manager Gabby Hartnett shook up his line-up and put me in right field."

The star's thrills did not stop with his mere appearance in a Chicago uniform, however. He celebrated his Cub debut by crashing a home run

with two men on base to lead Chicago to a 6 to 2 victory over the Phillies. He continued his great work the rest of the season, although a slump in the last week dropped his average just below the .300 mark.

Ever since then Nicholson has been rattling the fences and putting the ball out of the park in National League cities all over the circuit. Rival pitchers count him one of the most dangerous batters they have to face.

Just take his start in the 1940 season, for instance. His first safety that year was a Grand Slam homer off the delivery of Junior Thompson, which gave the Cubs a 6 to 2 victory over Cincinnati, league champions of 1939. And then he hit four homers the first week in June—one against Brooklyn as a pinch hitter, June 3, two homers in one game against the Phillies, June 6, and one against the Boston Bees, June 7.

Nicholson's philosophy on hitting is nothing if not simple.

"When you are going good, you can hit all day," he maintains. "When you get into a slump, you can't even buy a base hit. And, believe me, I've had my slumps."

The Chicago thumper was in no slump one day in July of 1944 in New York when he hit four

homers in four successive at bats, and then added a fifth his seventh time at the plate.

The event occurred on the Cubs' second eastern swing of the season. Against the Giants at the Polo Grounds on Saturday, July 22, he hit a round-tripper, his last time up, off the slants of Johnny Allen. In the opening game of a double-header the following day he drew a pass, which does not count as a time at bat. Then he hit three successive homers, two off Bill Voiselle, the Giants' sensational rookie pitcher, and also one off Swede Hanson.

His fifth four-base blow came in the second game of the double-header, in his seventh at bat since he started his splurge.

In the spree, Nicholson tied the major-league record of four homers in one double-header, originally set by Earl Averill of Cleveland on September 17, 1930, and subsequently matched by Jimmie Foxx of the Athletics on July 2, 1933, and by Jim Tabor of the Boston Red Sox on July 4, 1939.

In addition, his feat of four homers in four successive times at bat had been done only three times before in baseball's major-league history—by Bobby Lowe of the Boston Nationals on May 30, 1894, by Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees

on June 3, 1932, and by Jimmie Foxx on June 7 and 8, 1933.

"That's the best hitting I ever did," Billy says simply, and naturally no one disagrees with him.

Nicholson has distributed his homers with little partiality around the league, but he has been especially poisonous to Manager Casey Stengel and his Boston Braves. Said Stengel to Manager Jimmy Wilson of the Cubs before a game one day in the summer of 1943:

"Listen, Jimmy. Just take that guy, Nicholson, out of your line-up, and I'll let you put two other fellows in right field at the same time; and I'll put only eight men in the game for our side."

Nicholson wasted no time proving he should stay up in the big time, for in his first full two seasons in a Chicago uniform he drove in ninety-eight runs each campaign and hit first twenty-five and then twenty-six round-trippers. He slumped off slightly in 1942, driving out just twenty-one homers and banging home seventy-eight runs.

The next two seasons, however, he hit the jackpot to win National League slugging honors. In 1943 he came through with twenty-nine homers and 128 runs batted in, and in 1944 he increased his home run output to thirty-three, the highest

total of his career, while his R.B.I. column showed a total of 120.

In the two National League Most Valuable Player votings for 1944, one by *The Sporting News* of St. Louis, and the other by the Baseball Writers' Association of America, Nicholson was barely topped by Martin (Slats) Marion of the world champion St. Louis Cardinals. Marion was recognized as the dominant factor in the Redbirds' drive for their third successive National League flag and subsequent victory over the St. Louis Browns, even though his hitting was not so robust as Nicholson's.

In designating Marion, both award voters gave unprecedented weight to defensive superlatives. Marty hit only .269 in 144 games, and drove in only sixty-four runs. In sharp contrast to Marion's record offensively was that of the Cub star, who led his league in three batting departments. In both instances the voting was close, and in the Writers' balloting Marion beat out Nicholson by the scant margin of a single point.

As great as his success in the majors has been, Nicholson still goes back to the minors when giving credit for his rapid rise. He claims that Kiki Cuyler, another great Cubs star fielder, is responsible for the greatest advancement in his career.

"When I was playing at Chattanooga," he says, "Cuyler was managing the club, and he taught me the tricks of playing right field. He also improved my style at the plate, and I began hitting the ball farther than ever before. I really owe him a great deal."

Cuyler, incidentally, can probably be blamed for causing Connie Mack to make one of his few wrong guesses on a rookie.

Up to the time that Kiki took Nicholson in hand, Nick was not exactly a ball of fire. Connie had farmed him out three times, to Oklahoma City, Portsmouth, and Williamsport, and found he could not farm him out again. He had either to keep him or trade him, and the usually astute veteran Philadelphia manager happened to take the latter course.

Connie wanted Dee Miles, an outfielder who had played with the Washington Senators, and who had had a good season in 1938 with Joe Engel's Chattanooga club. As part of the deal for Dee, Mack gave Engel his pick of the Philadelphia assets at Williamsport, and Engel set a speed record in choosing the burly Nicholson.

In less than one season the Chattanooga boss had his profit, the tidy sum of \$35,000 which the Cubs had offered being the best of several large

bids from major-league outfits. The rest of the Nicholson saga is history.

There are three hurlers in the National League who have proved to be especially bothersome to Nicholson.

"The guy who gets me out the easiest," he says with frank candor, "is Max Lanier of the Cardinals. His left-handed slants break away from me and all I usually get is a lot of air with my swing. As for right-handers, Nate Andrews of the Boston Braves gives me the most trouble, although big Mort Cooper of the Cards isn't far behind. When I've been trying to hit against those three, I've made more wrong guesses than when I was taking the tests for color-blindness over at the Naval Academy."

Failure to pass that Navy test still hurts Nicholson, even though today he has gotten over his initial disappointment. He can recall every word the examining doctor said to him. Billy had sailed through the entrance exams and had made an otherwise fine impression and good score on the physical side.

"I'm sorry, son," the physician then said, "but you are color-blind. The Navy can't take you, and I'll have to recommend your rejection."

By the rejection the Navy lost a fine officer pros-

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pect, the Academy sports department lost an outstanding football and baseball player, and the Cubs gained a star.

Nicholson was married on December 28, 1937, to Nancy Kane, and the couple today has two fine sons, Bill, Jr., five, and Albert Kane, three. Nick hopes that one or both of his sons can take his place at Annapolis. That to him would be a bigger thrill than any he has ever received in baseball.

His marital status plus his color-blindness combined to keep him out of the service, although like many other star athletes who have been kept on the sidelines by some physical ailment, he would have gone in if he could.

Oddly enough, the Cubs' management knew nothing of his color-blindness. Once when Nicholson was in a batting slump, they ripped out a part of the distant center-field bleachers and painted the fence a soft brown, supposedly restful for the eyes. The move made no difference to Nick, who just kept on swinging until finally he had himself back in the groove.

"They could paint the fence a sky-blue pink," Nicholson said with a grin, "and it would make absolutely no difference to me."

For hobbies the big fellow follows the pattern of most major-leaguers. He likes to hunt and fish.

But there is a serious side to his make-up at the same time. For the past several winters he had studied law. He thinks maybe some day it will come in handy.

Nicholson is one baseball player who is saving for a rainy day. He is using his baseball earnings to equip him for a permanent career as a farmer in his home county after his diamond days are over. In the spring and late fall, even now, he helps his father and brothers maintain their farming interests.

Nicholson's two brothers are Albert, who is older, and Lawrence, who is younger. Around the farm Nick is no slouch for work, and can pick up a hundred-pound bag of fertilizer with one hand.

"You should see Lawrence, though," he declared. "He can handle three of them at one time. He's only a youngster, fourteen months my junior, but he weighs 340 pounds, mainly muscle."

Nick's personal hero in big-time baseball is Jimmie Foxx. "He came from a place only twelve miles from my home in Chestertown," he says, "and I never get tired of reading about his great feats."

It was beyond this good-looking Southerner's wildest dreams that he would ever be bracketed with Foxx as a slugger.

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Just as the young Nicholson admires Foxx, so do other youngsters of today admire the Cubs' sturdy outfielder himself. One of them asked Billy for his baseball cap.

"I was glad to send it to him," Nicholson declared. "He was a paratrooper about to go overseas in September of 1943, and he wanted to wear the cap on his first ride into battle."

Nicholson would have sent himself if he could. He's that kind of a guy.

WILLIAM BECK (BILL) NICHOLSON

Born December 11, 1915, at Chestertown, Md. Height, 6:00.

Weight, 200. Brown eyes and hair. Throws right and bats left-handed.

Year	Club	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1936	Philadelphia	Amer.	11	12	2	0	0	0	0	0	.000
1936	Okla. City	Texas	14	48	4	8	1	0	0	5	.167
1937	Portsmouth	Pied.	121	468	79	145	26	7	20	92	.310
1937	WilliamSPORT	NYP	10	23	5	5	1	0	1	9	.217
1938	WilliamSPORT	East.	137	511	96	154	26	17	22	96	.301
*1939	Chattanooga	South.	105	383	82	128	29	8	23	85	.334
1939	Chicago	Nat.	58	220	37	65	12	5	5	38	.295
1940	Chicago	Nat.	135	491	78	146	27	7	25	98	.297
1941	Chicago	Nat.	147	532	74	135	26	1	26	98	.254
1942	Chicago	Nat.	152	588	83	173	22	11	21	78	.294
1943	Chicago	Nat.	154	608	95	188	30	9	29	128	.309
1944	Chicago	Nat.	156	582	116	167	35	8	33	120	.287

Major League Totals 813 3033 485 874 152 41 139 560 .288

* Sold to Chicago Cubs for \$35,000, June 25, 1939. Played first game with Cubs Aug. 1, 1939.

ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

1940 National	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
1941 National	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
1943 National	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	.000
1944 National	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1.000
All-Star Game Totals	6	1	1	1	0	0	1	.167

AMOS ALONZO STAGG

“Football’s Grand Old Man”



AMOS ALONZO STAGG

CHAPTER XII

AMOS ALONZO STAGG "FOOTBALL'S GRAND OLD MAN"

IT may seem odd that a collection of chapters of famous American athletes of today should include a review of a man who was eighty-one years old on August 16, 1944. But following the football season of 1943, white-haired, sun-browned, wiry Amos Alonzo Stagg was named the Coach of the Year. The Grand Old Man of the Midway, who entered his fiftieth year of coaching in the autumn of 1939, was not only famous as a great gridiron strategist but as an apostle of clean living and moral integrity.

Amos Alonzo Stagg's own rugged career stood as the best argument for his ideals. Even though he was eighty-one years old in '44, he was still in the thick of the annual football combat.

When his record-breaking coaching service of forty-one years at the University of Chicago was ended by compulsory retirement in 1933, Stagg

characteristically refused to quit the game. Eleven years later he was rounding out his career in the comparative obscurity of a small college campus at the College of the Pacific at Stockton, California, a city of 47,000, where he was regarded as the first citizen.

During the 1943 season the small Stockton institution was well-equipped with big and capable athletes supplied by the U. S. Navy as part of a training program in World War II. Here a Stagg-coached team rolled up the smashing record that won for him the distinctive award of Coach of the Year.

In the early 1940's a generation equipped for war-thinking lacked the time and opportunity for sports that the people of the '30's enjoyed. But even during 1944 there were sports discussions that were electrified by the fact that an eighty-year-old coach, usually regarded as an elderly person on the sidelines, should come and take his place once more at the head of the parade.

The generations of the '40's were likely to forget, however, that Stagg was once a great athlete in his own right. He received the same flattering professional offers as star performers of the 1930's and '40's. But, intent upon a career in some form of Christian service, Stagg turned them all down.

Stagg was born in West Orange, New Jersey, one of a shoemaker's eight children. He was born in a modest home at 384 Valley Road, where several of his sisters, older than he, still lived in 1944.

Young Stagg was ambitious and worked his way through grade and high school; thence to Phillips Exeter (New Hampshire) Academy; through the Theology School at Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut; and through a Y. M. C. A. college at Springfield, Massachusetts, which offered a course in physical directorship.

Many of those days involved nickel meals and dangerous malnutrition.

He says, "At Yale, I had an unheated garret room for which I paid one dollar a week. I allowed myself only twenty cents a day for food. It was a starvation diet, and I fell ill for the first time in my life. The doctor ordered me to drop my nickel-and-dime nonsense."

While the boy was growing up in West Orange, baseball pitchers were discovering the curve-ball pitch. Naturally, the youngster was eager to master this new discovery; and after many months of effort, he possessed a curve ball that later won him fame at Yale.

When he arrived at New Haven he was already a cool and confident performer on the pitchers'

mound. For five successive seasons he hurled the Blue to championships. In one game, the records show that he struck out twenty Princeton batters. Another time, he defeated Harvard twice in four days, and in one of these Harvard games he struck out seventeen batters.

Professional offers from several major-league teams were refused because, as he explained, "The first motive was loyalty to Yale, inasmuch as I'd be lost to the team. The second was the character of professional baseball in those days."

The boy from West Orange turned out for football in his freshman year and won a place on the varsity. He did not play in important games, but on Yale's great team of 1888, he came into his own at right end and helped roll up a still unapproached record of 698 points in the season to the opponents' zero.

The following year he was named on the then famous and still renowned original All-America team picked by the late Walter Camp.

But it was gradually dawning on Stagg, who was heading for a career in the ministry by way of the Theology School at Yale, that he lacked the speaking ability demanded for the pulpit.

"I remember well when I spoke one night at a student conference at Lake Geneva in Wisconsin,"

he once related. "I spoke badly enough, but with the great John R. Mott and others on the platform, I seemed even worse by comparison."

The young man sat in his lonely tent at the conference and recalls that "I told myself that I could influence others to Christian ideals more effectively on the field than in the pulpit."

In 1944 it had been well past fifty years since Amos Alonzo Stagg had nailed his colors to the mast as a coach who put the welfare of his boys above every inducement of money or renown.

In that year he was still a football coach and saw no reason to haul his colors down. He coached an odd mixture of hard, smashing, give-no-quarter football, mixed with high ideals and good sportsmanship and straight-shooting honesty. He was once known to halt a game and protest a decision of the football officials who had, in his opinion, erred in favor of Stagg's own team.

Stagg did not become rich nor did he roll up a fabulous percentage of victories, but he has been loaded down with honors. The plaques, cups, scrolls, resolutions, honorary degrees, and newspaper clippings that now fill his modest, rose-covered cottage in Stockton, California, give glowing evidence that he really is a Grand Old Man.

"I take my football very seriously," he once told

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a contemporary, "but I try to preserve a sense of proportion. In talking to young coaches it has been my practice to emphasize that a coach must not take the game too much to heart. He can get his greatest satisfaction out of the good he may do for the youth with whom he works. My two sons, Amos Jr. and Paul, are coaching; but I told them not to go into it unless they looked on it as a field of service for youth."

This view was not one that the Grand Old Man developed late in life, but one that he expressed as far back as 1890. As star pitcher at Yale, he refused those offers of big salaries with professional baseball teams. Instead, he accepted his first coaching assignment at the Y. M. C. A. College in Springfield, Massachusetts, at the much more modest sum of \$2,500 a year, while he was also a Springfield student. There he remained a year and then took over the athletic directorship at the University of Chicago, which at that time was building.

"After much thought and prayer," he replied in his letter of acceptance to the Chicago authorities, "I feel decided that my life can best be used for my Master's service in the position which you have outlined."

That was the beginning of Stagg's celebrated forty-one-year stretch at Chicago, terminated by

compulsory retirement in 1933 when he had passed his seventieth milestone.

Brought up in West Orange, New Jersey, among lusty, drinking laborers, the young man formed an early and lifelong aversion to liquor. He never smoked, and he gave up coffee at the age of thirteen because he "wanted to become a wrestler."

"As I view it," he explained, "no man is too good to be an athletic coach for youth. Not to drink liquor, not to swear, and to shun loose and silly women—all these should be the ideals of the coach if he realizes his full opportunity for service.

"The day is past when a coach can be any kind of old rake and hold his job. Good character and clean sportsmanship along with good coaching is being more and more insisted upon by all of our colleges."

While no profanity was heard during a Stagg football practice, the drill was by no means a pitty-pat business. The old man could be amply tough, particularly with capable players who displayed an inclination to shirk or to quit.

"I never speak harshly to a candidate when I see he has no talent for the game," Stagg once said.

A favorite word with the Grand Old Man was "jackass." This word was intensified to "double

jackass" and "triple jackass" under moments of tremendous mental stress.

Many of his old-time players, some of them now prominent men of affairs, considered it a privilege to be members of the Order of the Jackass. Each season the first player to be called "jackass" was that year's president of the club. Several times, Stagg's own son Paul, who in 1944 was coaching at Worcester (Massachusetts) Polytechnic Institute, and also son Alonzo, Jr., coach at Susquehanna College at Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, were unwilling presidents of their father's Jackass Club at University of Chicago.

Stagg worked psychology to the legitimate limit, but he drew the line at writing himself anonymous letters to read to his players to arouse their fire before a big game, and he balked at inventing tall tales of opponents' perfidy—an old familiar custom within the ranks of sports enthusiasts.

On occasions, he was often known to counsel such great contemporaries as the late Knute Rockne at Notre Dame and Bill Roper at Princeton against "getting over-excited" and reminding them that "football is just a game."

Stagg had a high tenor singing voice and was something of a singer in his youth. He used that voice for its full value on the practice field to spur

his players with a reiterated "Harder! Harder!" that echoed in the ears of the men on his teams for years.

In the first forty years of his coaching, the Stagg football teams played 375 games, won 243, and tied 28. A portion of the losses came in the final half-dozen years at the University of Chicago. The adoption of an unusually strict scholastic requirement cut down the number of athletes entering the university, which finally abandoned varsity football after Stagg's departure.

Stagg's influence spread over men high in the profession, and his pupils numbered such great football figures as Dr. Joseph Raycroft, director of athletics at Princeton; Hugo Bezdek, for years Pennsylvania State College coach; Judge Walter P. Steffen, coach of Carnegie Tech at Pittsburgh; "Pat" Page of Butler, of Indiana and Chicago; Jesse Harper of Notre Dame; Fred M. Walker of Texas; Marc Catlin of Lawrence; "Fritz" Crisler of Minnesota, Princeton, and Michigan; Clarence Hirschberger, first player from west of the Alleghenies to be picked on an All-America team; Walter Eckersall, Walter Kennedy, Des Jardien, All-America players and later, officials at the nation's most important games.

The Grand Old Man of the Midway was the

co-author with Dr. Harry L. Williams, noted coach of Minnesota, of *A Treatise on Football*, published in 1893. Incidentally, back in the days of 1893, Dr. Williams, in collaboration with Stagg, first produced a system of football play that was subsequently modified and fashioned by the late Knute Rockne, and became known in later days as the "Notre Dame system."

In 1927, Stagg brought out the book *Touch-down* as co-author with Rex Scott. It had first appeared in installments in the magazine *Saturday Evening Post*.

Stagg was a fellow of the American Physical Education Society; Sons of the American Revolution; Psi Upsilon Fraternity; and Skull and Bones, honorary Yale society. In 1912 he took a mild whirl at politics and ran for presidential elector from Illinois on a Progressive Party ticket.

Sitting in his comfortable cottage near the College of the Pacific in Stockton, California, the Grand Old Man often enjoyed speaking to a group of neighbors and recalling practices that the people of the 1940's would find it almost impossible to understand. For Stagg had watched football develop from the kicking to the carrying stage and thence through the spectacular forward-passing era to the razzle-dazzle circus of the '40's.

Stagg remembered the fifteen-man teams and the era when the center—then called the “snapperback”—had to pass the ball with his foot. Then there was the famous “maul in goal,” when runner and tackler might wrestle for fifteen minutes in a struggle to get the ball grounded for a touchdown.

He recalled the origin of the term “gridiron” in the days when the football field was first marked off in parallel stripes. He had seen the introduction of interference, once strictly forbidden, and of the revolutionary basketball tactics of the forward pass. Stagg was on the first Yale team when slugging was abolished. He had survived the day of the superschedules, and his 1894 squad played twenty-two games. He had coached through the period when indoor football was popular. He had seen the professional game rise, fall, and rise again in the late 1930's.

A member of the Football Rules Committee since 1904, Stagg was named a life member after 1933, a position in which his influence on the game was incalculable. He was a leader in the organization of the Big Ten Conference of Colleges in the Midwest. He loved the game of football as a moulder of youthful character, but more than once he had seen it put on probation and in danger of extinction.

In 1899 Stagg invented the tackling dummy, a contrivance hinged on a wire superstructure that allowed tacklers to perfect their technique at the expense of a durable machine rather than the expendible bones of a teammate.

For years too many to count, Stagg's fake kick maneuver on the gridiron was a headache for opponents. The tackles back and turtleback plays, famous in their day, were of Stagg's contrivance. His various applications of the forward pass, when it came, contributed heavily to his ground-gaining strategies. He was the first coach to number players for the convenience of spectators, a widely welcomed innovation.

He was, as a matter of fact, a pioneer in many branches of college athletics. He took a football team to the Pacific Coast and to Cleveland from the University of Chicago in 1894 and inaugurated the first intersectional "home-and-home series" with the East by exchanging dates with Pennsylvania in 1898 and 1899. He brought Brown and Cornell to the "Midway" of Chicago in the latter year, and in 1904 his Chicago team was one of the first Midwest teams to play the United States Military Academy at West Point.

He sent the first American college baseball nine to Japan, where Fred Merrifield, one of his star

baseball players, helped establish the American game among the Nipponese, who took to the game very quickly.

Stagg turned out a number of Olympic winners, notably James Lightbody, who at St. Louis in 1904 scored an Olympic triple by taking the 800- and 1500-meter-runs and the 3200-meter steeplechase. His Clyde Blair, a sprinter, was the first Midwest athlete to break "ten flat" in the 100-yards dash.

He was a member of the American Olympic Committee for the games at Athens in 1906; London, 1908; Stockholm, 1912; Antwerp, 1920; and Paris, 1924.

His big interscholastic meets in track and basketball, sponsored at the University of Chicago, became national affairs; and he fostered the annual national collegiate meets each June, which brought to Stagg Field the track and field winners of sectional meets from coast to coast.

Coach Stagg was always mighty proud of the fine lady he likes to call his "right-hand man." On September 10, 1894, he married Stella Robertson of Albion, New York. He met her when he went to Chicago as a coach. She was a co-ed there and twelve years his junior. To the Staggs were born, in addition to the sons Alonzo, Jr. and Paul, one

daughter, Ruth, who later married J. Alton Lauren. During World War II, Ruth's husband left a successful business career to serve in the U.S. Army as a captain.

Coach Stagg's wife was always as enthusiastic about his coaching and his ideals of sportsmanship as her husband. For years she kept meticulous charts of the University of Chicago football games, and each Saturday night the *Chicago Tribune* would send a messenger to the Stagg home for her charts. These would be photographed and reproduced Sunday morning in the *Tribune* sporting section so that Chicago fans might follow each play of the game, much as a general follows each move of a battle.

"Mrs. Stagg has charted every game for me for years," the Grand Old Man once said, as he smiled and placed a hand over hers. "I watch the play without much worry about details, because I know I have always a complete set of statistics waiting for me at home."

Sports and athletics play a big part in life at the couple's modest cottage at Stockton. There is a huge blackboard on the wall of one of the rooms, where the famed coach charts new plays as they occur to him.

The year 1939 was his fiftieth year of football

coaching and his seventh at College of the Pacific. When age forced Stagg's retirement from Chicago, he was engaged to take the Pacific position by Dr. Tully C. Knoles, president.

Although Pacific was a small school, it was the oldest co-educational institution in California and boasted of a beautiful, harmonious "tailor-made" campus. By the time Stagg reached the Stockton campus, the days of his inability to express himself with color and vigor before an audience had melted away, and his ability at speechmaking had made him an outstanding "front man" for the small institution.

One of the most easily remembered quotations that was inspired by Stagg's acceptance of the Pacific job was that of President Knoles, who at that time said:

"The glory of Stagg's life has been his emphasis on character. With him the fundamentals of sportsmanship have been fairness, strict training, loyalty, and devotion to ideals."

Strict training was constantly a beacon of Coach Stagg's life and his sons, in middle age, remembered that their father had always insisted that they retire at least by ten o'clock, even in their upperclassman days at Chicago.

The Grand Old Man was always a hard worker,

arising at six o'clock every day. Even until he approached close to the age of eighty, he would jog or trot a mile every morning.

At the age of seventy-five, Stagg teamed with his son Paul in a tennis tournament for the summertime doubles championship of Macatawa, Michigan, a resort town where the family had a summer home. Father Stagg and son Paul went to the final round. That the Grand Old Man was in fine fettle at that advanced age was indicated by the fact that the Stagg duo forced their quarter-final and semi-final opponents to four out of six sets.

Stagg liked to boast that as a crusader for temperance in drinking, eating, and sleeping, he had never "eaten a so-called 'hot dog' in my life."

Serious illness beset the Grand Old Man only once—in middle life. In the early years of the century a long siege of rheumatism drove him to Florida during the summer months, but he clung to his football coaching despite the pain. Through the autumn he would continue his work from a wheel chair, which he pushed along the sidelines of the University of Chicago gridiron.

Finally somebody suggested an electric run-about of the "showcase" variety, and Stagg whistled and chug-chugged with amazing skill in and out of the practice huddles.

Coach Stagg, who took his Bachelor degree at Yale in 1888, was first signed as coach and director of the Department of Physical Training at Chicago by William Rainey Harper, first president of the University. In 1900 he was given a full professorship. This made him a member of the University Senate and holder of his position "for a lifetime," but subject to retirement at seventy.

Stagg was the first athletic coach in the United States to have his position thus well fortified. He was awarded an honorary degree of physical education at Springfield (Massachusetts) College in 1912 and a Master of Arts degree at Oberlin (Ohio) University in 1923.

The veteran coach's career encompassed the whole athletic history of the University of Chicago prior to World War II, for he went to the school when its doors were first opened in 1892. A student song ran as follows:

"Then Stagg was pitcher, catcher, coach, half-back, and shortstop, too,

"In those days of Auld Lang Syne our athletes were few."

These lines accurately described the athletic situation, for Stagg's participation in contests was in harmony with the rules of those "good old days"

which did not bar faculty members from college teams. After all, his reputation as a Yale University athlete helped gate receipts, for they could capitalize on his name as a famous baseball pitcher and an All-America end.

Returning for a moment to the matter of Stagg's forced retirement at Chicago, which became effective as of June 1, 1933, this crossroad of his life was none of his own choosing. If it had not been for the University's retirement-at-seventy policy, he would probably be there yet.

When Stagg did retire, much against his will, he told reporters:

"I feel good for fifteen to twenty years more of active service. I went into athletic work because it offered the largest opportunity for service through contact with young men. No scheme of life which removes that contact would meet with my ambition, and, frankly, I am not content to step out."

So far, Amos Alonzo Stagg hasn't stepped out. In athletics he has been the nearest thing to perpetual motion.

JOHN SAMUEL
(JOHNNY) VANDER MEER

“Double No-Hit Johnny”



JOHN SAMUEL (JOHNNY) VANDER MEER

CHAPTER XIII

JOHN SAMUEL (JOHNNY) VANDER MEER
"DOUBLE NO-HIT JOHNNY"

THE movie camera ground on slowly as the Brooklyn Dodgers went through their workout. It caught Manager Max Carey batting grounders to the infield. It caught one of the coaches hitting flies to the outfield. And it caught the earnest endeavors of a curly-haired youngster of eighteen who was acting the part of "A Typical American Boy" in the film.

"Cut!" called the cameraman, and the players sauntered toward the clubhouse. Tagging along behind was the kid, seemingly unconscious of the fact that no one was paying him the slightest attention. He plodded along, intent with his role of a typical boy who was being given a chance to catch on with a major-league baseball club.

Johnny Vander Meer's presence in that 1933 spring training camp in Miami, Florida, was considered just so much excess baggage by Manager

Carey and his players. They tolerated the boy merely because the forthcoming film was to be used to promote baseball and the National League.

That Johnny Vander Meer would ever be anything but "the kid we took South for the pictures," never crossed the mind of any member of the Dodgers' official family. That one day he would become more famous than any man then in camp was a thought too impossible to entertain.

Yet that is what happened. The names of the 1933 Dodgers have practically become lost except to those closest to baseball. The name of Vander Meer, however, is destined to live forever, if for no other reason than the two no-hit games which he pitched in succession.

The tall, well-developed southpaw has come a long way since he first became acquainted with organized baseball. World Series, All-Star games, National League championship, minor- and major-league records—they all became familiar to this personable youth whose sinewy left arm could fire a baseball with the speed of a thunderbolt.

Johnny did not make the jump from obscurity to fame all at once. Yet that he made good at all reads like a make-believe screen plot. It is almost too pat to be true.

The story begins, quite naturally, with his birth on November 2, 1914, at Prospect Park, New Jersey. His early years were like those of any other boy. He liked most things that normal boys like, and his special passion was baseball. He was reared by hard-working, religious parents, and he was a regular attendant at church and Sunday School services in a little Dutch Reformed Church.

Ask any of his early friends what sort of a boy he was, and you get the key to his character today.

"He was a nice youngster," they all agree, "respectful to his elders, quiet, and modest. He had a ready smile—which he still has—and he has grown into the type of man everyone knew he would."

"I played high school ball," Vander Meer says of his early diamond career, "and also pitched on the sand lots around home for a local Sunday School League."

His performances in those days were really what eventually gave him his big chance. He hurled five no-hitters, three of them in succession, although today he does not count that record for much. It counted then, though, for it brought his name to the attention of Dave Driscoll, at that time business manager for the Dodgers.

Driscoll had been so impressed by his scout's report on young Vander Meer that he went to New

Jersey one day to look him over. What he saw impressed him, and he filed the lad's name away in his memory for future reference.

One day not long afterwards Driscoll chanced to be in the office of John A. Heydler, President of the National League, when a representative of a movie outfit called to make Heydler a proposition. The idea was for Heydler to find some good-looking American boy who could play baseball passably well, and have him pose as a rookie trying to catch on with a major-league club at his first spring training camp.

The picture was to show what the average rookie went through—how he ate, how he was received by the manager, the coaches, and fellow players, what he learned, and how he spent his time on the ball field.

“What I really want,” the representative told the National League Prexy, “is a boy from a modest home, one whose father is of moderate means, and principally a kid who has some chance of sticking with the club. The movie will promote baseball, and it will show the average American kid that he, too, may have such a chance.”

Heydler received the movie scout's request enthusiastically, but didn't have a chance to answer it. Driscoll leaned forward in his chair.

"I've got just the boy for you," he declared. "He's got everything you want, in addition to good looks and a pleasing personality."

Vander Meer was signed for the picture, and the lad took to his job earnestly. It may have been only a picture to Heydler, the movie company, and the Dodgers; but to Johnny it was the chance of a lifetime.

"I always had wanted to make the big leagues," he later declared, "and I felt that this was my chance. I tried so hard I pretended every pitch was a third strike to Babe Ruth."

Before Vandy left for the South, pictures were taken of him at home, showing him with his parents, packing for the trip, and then leaving on the train. The rest of the film was shot in Florida, depicting him as an official member of the Dodger family, when in reality he signed up only to make the picture seem complete.

Vander Meer's experiences in training camp would truly have been lonely if it had not been for the interested tutoring he received from Joe Shaute. Joe was a pitcher who had just entered the National League after a dozen years with the Cleveland Indians.

"I'll always be grateful to Joe," Vander Meer declared later. "His friendly help, not only then

but later also, proved a turning point in my career."

A portsider himself, Shaute knew the handicaps Vander Meer faced with his control. The kid had a world of speed, but the plate seemed a pinprick in the distance. He just couldn't seem to find it with regularity.

Shaute taught the youngster out of his experience, and Vander Meer absorbed the knowledge. But Shaute's help did not stop with mere tutoring. He convinced the Dodgers to take the youngster on and to send him to Dayton in the Middle-Atlantic League, where he won eleven and lost ten in 1933.

Impressed, the Dodgers promoted him to Class A ball with Scranton in the New York-Pennsylvania League, where despite lapses in control he compiled a .500 average for two seasons, winning eighteen and losing the same number. All the while he was with Scranton, Shaute continued to work with him.

Vander Meer might have been ready for the National League as early as the 1936 season, if he had not come up with an unfortunate shoulder injury which retarded his career.

"I was shagging flies in the outfield before a game one day," Vandy recalled, "when my spikes

caught in the spongy turf. I turned a somersault that put me out of the game for two weeks. I hurt the back of my left shoulder and couldn't get going again the latter part of the 1935 season."

Brooklyn gave up the kid and sold him to the Boston National League club, which ever since has figuratively been kicking itself for allowing Vandy to escape from it. Jimmy Hamilton, owner of Nashville in the Southern Association, talked Bob Quinn into letting Vander Meer go in a winter deal.

Nashville kept him only six weeks, during which he worked only twenty-two innings in ten games. Unable to see they had a star in the making, the Vols sent Johnny to Durham on option, and it happened that Durham was owned by the Cincinnati Reds.

All at once the boy found himself. Before the rest of his abbreviated season was over, the curly-haired speed merchant had won nineteen games and lost only six. In the process he struck out 295 batters in 214 innings, including twenty in one game, to establish new records for the season and for a single engagement. The feat was considered of such magnitude that he was voted the outstanding player of the minor leagues for that season.

Just to prove that his regular-season work had

been no mistake, Vandy went on to the play-offs to strike out thirty men in two games and set all the major-league clubs to bidding for him. Naturally, owning Durham, the Reds had the inside track. A little persuasion, plus the addition of \$25,000 of Owner Powel Crosby's money, brought Vander Meer to the Reds.

Despite his great year in the minors, the New Jersey Dutchman was not quite ready for the majors. Manager Chuck Dressen watched him carefully in spring training at Tampa, Florida, in the early months of 1937, and was bothered by the kid's wildness. He gave him a few chances when the season began, but Vandy couldn't control his speed, although he did win three games. Dressen shipped him to Syracuse in the International League, where he won five and lost eleven.

Although Vander Meer had no way of knowing it, his star was due to rise in 1938. That was the year he came up with his two no-hit games in succession and was credited with a victory in the annual All-Star game.

What happened to him all at once? Who was responsible for his leap to greatness?

That, too, is a story in itself.

During the winter of 1937-38, Cincinnati's general manager, Larry MacPhail, went to Brooklyn,

and Dressen lost his managership of the team. From Boston the Reds lured Bill McKechnie, the dour Presbyterian Scot, to act as manager, and Deacon Bill brought Hank Gowdy along as coach.

At Boston, McKechnie has been given credit as a great handler of mediocre talent in general and of pitchers in particular. He had brought the supposedly washed-up Danny MacFayden back to the point where he again was a winning hurler. He had amazed the baseball world with his work with Jim Turner and Lou Fette. These two pitchers had spent all their careers in the minors, and were thought too old for the major leagues.

At the Tampa spring training camp in 1938, McKechnie and Gowdy went to work on their young pitcher. They studied him intently while he toiled on the mound. Then McKechnie solved the problem.

"Look, Hank," he exclaimed one afternoon. "The kid's control is all right when he throws overhand. When he slips into a half sidearm delivery, he loses control, and his ball goes high and wide."

That was the secret of Vander Meer's wildness. In moments of stress he unconsciously pitched half sidearm, and the ball would not go where he wanted it to. But now that McKechnie and

Gowdy had discovered the ailment, they had to effect a cure.

Smart managers, especially those who have a \$25,000 pitcher on their hands, do not attempt any radical change in the hurler's natural delivery. They don't make overhanders out of sidearmers, or sidearmers out of underhanders. They merely try to find what is wrong in the pitcher's natural delivery and to correct that fault.

"Gowdy and I determined that Johnny's natural style was overhand, whether he realized it or not," McKechnie disclosed. "That much established, we had to discover how to make him stick to that delivery."

In puzzling over their problem the two suddenly recalled that the great Lefty Grove once had a similar problem. He too was wild until he settled down into his famous overhand motion. They also remembered that Lefty had had trouble with his follow-through, which he subsequently corrected.

The canny pair figured out a new wind-up for Johnny, copied from Grove's. It made the boy pitch overhand and partially corrected his failure to follow through. Vander Meer worked hard and copied instructions faithfully. McKechnie and Gowdy were patient, but when Vander Meer

could not quite get used to the new motion, they made arrangements for him to have a talk with Grove himself.

The situation was ticklish. Here was a kid unknown to any except his own teammates asking advice from one of the most famous pitchers in the game. Moreover, Grove had been a temperamental star, and many of the baseball writers and several of the players of the day disapproved of him. How would Grove receive the youngster?

Whatever their fears, they had been wasted, for Grove took a genuine interest in Vander Meer.

"He took me into the clubhouse and spent quite a while showing me just what he did to overcome his trouble," related Johnny. "He showed me how he had cured himself of not following through, by exaggerating his motion."

Grove demonstrated how he had brought his talented left arm down across his body until his forearm struck his right knee.

"By doing this," Grove had said, "I found I was holding the ball a second longer, that I was looking directly at the plate when I let it go, and best of all, I was getting the ball into the strike zone."

Lefty went on to explain that as the delivery became natural, he no longer had to hit his knee.

"And I was glad of that little item," Lefty

laughed, "because some days my forearm would actually be bruised and sore."

From that moment Vander Meer began to pick up; and when he had absorbed another little piece of advice from McKechnie and Gowdy—that of lengthening his stride a bit—Johnny was on his way. The rest was another McKechnie prescription—practice.

On April 22, 1938, Vander Meer started against Pittsburgh. It would be nice to say that he came through with flying colors, but he was still just coming along. He had to be relieved in the third inning. The wise McKechnie next gave Vandy a chance at relief pitching, instead of starting, and in two appearances against the St. Louis Cardinals he was a greatly improved hurler. He was calm, and he had control.

He got another starting chance as a result, and on May 2 against Pittsburgh he went as far as the ninth inning. Leading 8-0, he became excited at the prospects of winning. Trying too hard not to issue a pass, he began to carve the center of the plate. The Pirates exploded with three straight hits, and Vandy was replaced.

Vander Meer had won major-league games, but still he was not ready to start and finish a full nine innings. On May 8 he opposed Bucky Walters and

the lowly Phillies. He lost 2-0 because of his own wildness and Walters' shutout hurling. On May 14 he started against the Cardinals at St. Louis. In the ninth he had a 5-1 lead when he blew up again and had to be replaced.

All this time a less patient manager than McKechnie might have given up. The man he had hoped would be a prize was well on his way towards becoming a prize lemon. He had streaks of brilliance when no one could see his fast ball. At other times he was so erratic he was of no use to the team. He was nervous to start with, and an error behind him would blow him sky-high.

To his credit, McKechnie stuck with his boy. His forbearance finally bore fruit on May 20 in the Polo Grounds. Vander Meer pitched a great game against the Giants. He shut out the New Yorkers with a bare five hits. He walked only four batters and struck out eight.

"Best of all," said McKechnie, "three of those strike-outs came in the ninth. The kid finally proved that the ninth inning held no more terrors for him. Nor for Gowdy and me," he added as an afterthought.

Three days later Vander Meer failed to go the distance against Boston, although he did manage to salvage his victory.

Then he really went to town with three beautifully pitched ball games. He beat the Cardinals 2-1 in ten innings, allowing five hits and walking two men, one of them intentionally. He set down the Dodgers 4-1 with five hits. And he defeated the Giants 4-1, giving them only three hits and walking only three. Between the first and the ninth inning, he did not allow a safety, and two of the Giant hits barely went through the infield.

Thus he came to the first of his two no-hitters. He was pitching beautifully now, and had the confidence to go with it.

"I felt I could put the ball where I wanted to," Vander Meer explained, "and my stuff was never better."

On June 11, 1938, he faced the Boston Bees at Cincinnati. He worked carefully, pitching to each batter's known weakness. It wasn't enough for him to blaze his fast ball right over the plate. He wanted to slice the corners with it.

He did just that. No Boston batter got a hit, and only three of them received passes. And those passes were not the result of wildness. When a pitcher tries for the corners, he is bound to miss once in a while. The score was 3-0.

His performance set the sports world to talking. A great crowd of 38,748 paying customers, plus

1,700 guests, shoved their way into Ebbets Field the night of June 15 to see this speedball merchant in action.

He did not disappoint them. Under the arc lights in Metropolitan New York's first night game, he unfurled his second no-hitter in a row, beating the Dodgers 6-0. He did not have his hair-trigger control this time, as he walked eight, but he always had enough stuff to pull himself out in the clutch. He had his biggest letdown in the ninth, when with one out he walked the next three batters. He then bore down and forced the final two batters into outs.

No other major-league pitcher has ever pitched two no-hit games in successive starts. And up until the summer of 1944, no other hurler had ever hurled two the same season. Jim Tobin of the Boston Braves is credited with two no-hitters for 1944, although his second effort was curtailed at the end of five innings because of darkness.

With these two performances, as was duly recorded in baseball publications, Vander Meer broke three major-league records, tied one modern big-league mark, and erased one National League standard.

His no-hitters automatically gave him the most no-hitters hurled in one season, the most hurled

consecutively, and the fewest hits in two consecutive games, none. He tied the modern record of two no-hit games in a pitcher's career, and set a new mark for consecutive hitless innings with eighteen and one third.

Johnny stretched his hitless innings record in his next start, for at Boston on June 19 he pitched three and one third more innings without allowing a safety before Debs Garms singled to center on a three-and-two count. Vander Meer's final tally was twenty-one and two thirds innings.

Vander Meer became the eleventh major-leaguer in the history of baseball to pitch two no-hitters, although two of these eleven have pitched three. Lawrence J. Corcoran achieved his trio while he toiled for the Chicago Nationals in 1880, 1882, and 1884; and Denton T. (Cy) Young did it while serving with the Boston Nationals in 1897 and the Boston Americans in 1904 and 1906.

The others, although not in succession and not in one season, include Albert W. Atkisson, Frank E. Smith, Adrian C. Joss, Hubert B. Leonard, James F. Galvin, William H. Terry, Theodore Breitenstein, and Christy Mathewson.

Dazzy Vance had previously held the National League record of seventeen and one third consecutive hitless innings, which Vander Meer smashed

by more than four innings. Vandy fell short of the major-league record, however, which is held by Cy Young with twenty-three innings.

Probably Vander Meer has had no more trying moments in his up-and-down career than he faced in the tense closing minutes of that exciting second no-hitter.

The atmosphere was electric. All the players were on edge. Even the partisan Brooklyn fans momentarily deserted their favorites to pull for the hard-working Cincinnati pitcher.

With one man gone in the ninth, Vander Meer began to tighten up. The strain was beginning to tell. He pitched carefully, but before he knew it he had put Babe Phelps, Cookie Lavagetto, and Dolph Camilli on base with passes.

Vander Meer took off his cap and wiped his brow with his sleeve. He glanced toward the Cincinnati bench and Manager McKechnie. Johnny realized that ordinarily he would have been yanked for a relief pitcher, but this time McKechnie made no move to replace him.

The Reds' manager caught the worried expression on his star's face and hurried out to the mound.

"Quit trying so hard," he told Vandy, patting him on the back. "Just take it slow and easy."

Burly Ernie Lombardi, the Cincy catcher, lumbered out to the middle of the infield.

"Let's pretend we're playing catch," he said earnestly. "I'll hold up my mitt, and you hit it. Forget there's anyone else in this ball park but you and me."

Vander Meer rubbed the ball against his pants leg. Ernie Koy, the Dodgers' center fielder was up. Vandy let go with everything he had, and Koy sent a sharp grounder down the third base line. Lew Riggs gobbled it up and threw the slowfooted Phelps out by ten feet.

Up came Leo Durocher, the Brooks' shortstop. His best was a fly to center field, and the game was over.

Vander Meer's teammates carried him in triumph to their dressing room, and the celebration rivaled any World Series winning celebration ever staged. Vander Meer hugged Lombardi. Players jostled each other to shake the pitcher's hand and pat him on the back. Spectators charged the door.

Off to one side Manager McKechnie and Hank Gowdy waited their turn. Their congratulations were less effusive but just as sincere.

"You did it, Johnny," they said practically in unison. "We knew you could."

It was a historic moment for all three men.

Despite his great feat, there were still some who doubted Vander Meer's claim to greatness. For them, his All-Star game performance that summer removed all doubt.

Older heads had advised Bill Terry, manager of the National League team, to start a more experienced pitcher; for example, his own Carl Hubbell. Terry followed his own hunch, however, and started "Double-No-Hit" Johnny. He was never sorry that he had followed his hunch and had made this decision.

Vander Meer faced only ten men in his three-inning stint, and used only thirty-one pitches in disposing of them. And these batters were no ordinary players. They included such stars as Charley Gehringer, the 1937 American League batting king; Jimmie Foxx, the major-league home-run leader; Joe Di Maggio, one of the greatest right-handed batters in history; Bill Dickey, the Yankees' big money hitter; and Joe Cronin, who then had one of the best pair of eyes in baseball. Vandy gave up one hit, walked none, and received credit for the victory.

"Vander Meer's got it," was the tribute paid him after that game by Mickey Cochrane, famous Athletics' catcher and later manager of Detroit. "He has poise and plenty of stuff."

"I only wish I had him on my club. He's a great pitcher," said Cronin.

When Vander Meer was right, he was almost unhittable. Once a batter described him thus:

"He keeps his pitching hand behind him, his foot cocked in your face, and really guns the ball in there. It's a nice loose delivery, no hitch at all, and he has an easy follow-through."

Vander Meer wound up the 1938 season with fifteen victories and ten defeats. He helped bring the last-place finishers of 1937 up to fourth place in '38. In so doing, however, he developed a sore arm. He thinks it happened when he took that tumble shagging flies in the outfield at Scranton in 1935.

The season of 1939 Johnny is willing to forget. With a succession of ailments he became little more than a fifth wheel on the Reds' pitching staff. He won only five games and lost eight. When the Associated Press made its annual poll of the year's biggest disappointments, lo! the names of Vander Meer and the sad Northwestern University football team led all the rest.

To his credit, Vander Meer never complained. He did everything possible to discover his trouble. He practiced every day and pitched in batting practice. He chased grounders in the infield and

flies in the outfield. He never once alibied, although he realized that he would have to make himself all over again as a pitcher.

Cincinnati won the National League pennant, but Vander Meer didn't even get off the bench in the 1939 World Series. He had to sit idly by and watch his mates lose to the Yankees in four straight games.

"The World Series came just one year too late for me," was all he would say.

His arm trouble continued over into 1940, and McKechnie sadly sent him down to Indianapolis where he could get more work than the Reds could afford to give him. He came back on September 5 and defeated the Pirates, climaxing his triumphal return by winning his game and scoring the winning run in the thirteen-inning contest with Philadelphia, which clinched the 1940 league pennant for the Reds.

In '41, '42, and '43 Vander Meer had good seasons, with records of 16-13, 18-12, and 15-16, respectively. According to McKechnie he should have had his biggest year in 1944.

"He was getting so he could pitch to spots again," said Bill, "and we sure could have used him."

Vander Meer, however, was called for service

with the United States armed forces in August of 1943. He was rejected then because of a stomach condition, but when recalled for examination, he passed. He chose the Navy and donned his bell-bottomed trousers March 3, 1944. He spent his indoctrination period at Sampson Naval Training Base in New York, where he pitched fine ball for the service team. In September he was shipped to the Pacific.

Vander Meer can trace his ancestry straight back to Holland, where his forefathers ran canal boats and filled their homes with bowling trophies. He found out only recently that he can claim kinship with Jan Vermeer, a painter who lived near Delft, Holland, some three hundred years ago. Johnny was impressed when he was told that the forty-two known Vermeer canvases are valued at \$25,000,000.

He was married on October 12, 1940, to Lois Louise Stewart. They now have a young daughter.

As to many another American youngster, Babe Ruth was Vander Meer's hero. After Vander Meer had completed his second no-hitter, the Babe boomed at him, "Nice going, kid!"

"That was my biggest thrill in baseball," said Johnny.

McKechnie is convinced that before Vander

Meer passes from the scene he will have established himself as one of the truly great southpaw pitchers of all time. Even with his good performances from 1940-43, however, the Cincinnati star had not steadied his pitching into a regular groove.

"He was subject to periods of dazzling brilliance," said McKechnie, "and then he would hit the other extreme and be absolutely ineffective. He beat the tough clubs easily, and let the easy teams pound him from the box. When he comes back, I think we can iron him out."

Vander Meer was the strike-out king of both leagues during his last two seasons before entering the Navy and of the National League during his last three seasons. At the same time he led the senior circuit in issuing bases on balls in 1943. But he doesn't talk much about that. His record tells the story.

As proud as Manager McKechnie is of Vander Meer's many records in baseball, he is even prouder of him for his personality.

"Vander Meer was a real leader in this club," McKechnie declared after the hurler had left for the Navy. "The boys looked up to him and respected him—and so did I. He was always a credit to baseball. Baseball can't have too many of Johnny Vander Meer's type."

298 FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES

JOHN SAMUEL VANDER MEER

Born November 2, 1914, at Prospect Park, N. J. Height, 6.00.

Weight, 190. Hazel eyes and light brown hair.

Throws left and bats right-handed.

Entered United States Navy, March 3, 1944.

Year	Club	League	G	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg.
1933	Dayton	Mid. Atl.	32	183	11	10	.524	206	108	87	132	74	4.28
1934	Scranton	NYP	32	164	11	8	.579	171	90	68	108	69	3.73
1935	Scranton	NYP	24	133	7	10	.412	153	89	79	88	90	5.35
1936	Nashville	South.	10	22	0	1	.000	29	22	18	18	25	7.36
1936	Durham	Pied.	30	214	19	6	.760	151	74	63	295	116	2.65
1937	Cincinnati	Nat.	19	84	3	5	.375	63	41	36	52	69	3.86
1937	Syracuse	Int.	17	105	5	11	.313	82	54	39	74	80	3.34
1938	Cincinnati	Nat.	32	225	15	10	.600	177	89	78	125	103	3.12
1939	Cincinnati	Nat.	30	129	5	9	.357	128	76	67	102	95	4.67
1940	Indianapolis*	A.A.	14	105	6	4	.600	76	33	28	109	65	2.40
1940	Cincinnati	Nat.	10	48	3	1	.750	38	24	20	41	41	3.75
1941	Cincinnati	Nat.	33	226	16	13	.552	172	83	71	202	126	2.83
1942	Cincinnati	Nat.	33	244	18	12	.600	188	78	66	186	102	2.43
1943	Cincinnati	Nat.	36	289	15	16	.484	228	102	92	174	162	2.87

Major League Totals 193 1245 75 66 .532 994 493 430 882 698 3.11

* Optioned to Indianapolis, June 28, 1940 and recalled August 29, 1940.

WORLD SERIES RECORD

Year	Club	League	G	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg.
1940	Cincinnati	Nat.	1	3	0	0	.000	2	0	0	2	3	0.00

ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

Year	League	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg.
1938	National	3	1	0	1.000	1	0	0	1	0	0.00
1942	National	3	0	0	.000	2	0	0	4	0	0.00
1943	National	2½	0	0	.000	2	1	0	6	1	0.00
All-Star Game Totals		8¾	1	0	1.000	5	1	0	11	1	0.00

FRED (DIXIE) WALKER

“Major-League Batting King”



FRED (DIXIE) WALKER

CHAPTER XIV

FRED (DIXIE) WALKER
"MAJOR-LEAGUE BATTING KING"

IF ever a baseball player deserved the enjoyable, pleasant, and lucrative living that major-league baseball offers, that fellow is Dixie Walker of the Brooklyn Dódgers.

If ever a baseball player crashed through to glory despite misfortune enough to dull the ambitions of even the most aspiring young boy, that fellow is Dixie Walker.

If ever a baseball player was enshrined in the hearts of his fans, that fellow is this same Dixie Walker of the team lovingly termed by Brooklynites as "Dem Bums."

Fred (Dixie) Walker had such a hard life as a boy, had so many injuries as a ball player, and was switched to so many clubs in his career that it is a wonder he ever had a chance to settle down and show what he could do with one team. He got that chance with the Dodgers, and in 1944 he

walked off with the National League batting championship.

For Dixie, 1944 marked his sixth season with the Dodgers. The most time he had ever spent with one club before was two and a half years with the New York Yankees. In his first ten years in organized baseball he played with eleven different teams.

“When I came to the Dodgers in midseason of 1939,” the tall, good-looking Southerner declared, “it was almost like coming home. Maybe I didn’t realize it right away, but Brooklyn is sure home to me now.”

It did not take long for Flatbush to take Dixie to its heart. For him they modified their raucous voices. For him there were cheers instead of jeers, and that particular type of noise developed in the Bronx and adopted by Brooklyn fans was never hurled his way.

Walker, all six feet and 180 pounds of him, responded by playing his best baseball for the Dodgers. His forte was batting, and he always flirted with the .300 mark. In 1941 he hit his major-league high up to that time with a neat average of .311.

Like rare wine Dixie improved with age, and it was in 1944 that he hit his peak. Hitting com-

petently and consistently throughout the season, he wound up the campaign with a sizzling .357 average, which won for him not only the batting championship of the National League, but of the major leagues as well. Lou Boudreau, the American League leader, posted a mark of .327.

For Walker the year 1944 was a very satisfying time in life. It saw him at the crest of his major-league career. It saw him comparatively wealthy through sound business interests. It saw him a happy family man with an adoring wife and three sturdy children. It saw him a hero to his fans.

It was easy for him to recall the early days of his life, when getting up in the morning meant only another hard day's work in the steel mills of Birmingham, Alabama. Those were days when baseball was something to be dreamed of as he sweated near the open hearths; when fun was to be had only on his days off.

Dixie was born on September 24, 1910, at Villa Rica, Georgia. Although English on his father's side, he is also of plain American stock. His mother was a Southerner from Tennessee, and his grandparents came from Pennsylvania, where they owned a coal mine. When Dixie's father was born, the family moved to Alabama.

It would be nice to say that young Dixie was a

star baseball player in high school in Birmingham, but his high school had no team. Instead, he played one year of high school football as a half-back. As a tall but thin kid, he was fast on his feet and shifty in the open field, but he did not have time to develop in merely one year.

Fred was not born with any silver spoon in his mouth. He knew early in life what it meant to work very hard for a living. When he was only fifteen, he had to leave high school to work in the steel mills; and it is with a mixture of pride and relief that he now looks back upon those days.

"Some ball players complain of having to play in the heat," he laughs today. "Why, they don't know what heat is.

"I remember back in the mills when my shirt used to catch on fire from blazing cinders. That was when I was first starting in as a 'pull-up' boy, that is, pulling up the doors of the open hearths.

"Later when I was promoted to operating an electric crane high above the hearths, I remember how the heat would blast up and burn the soles of my feet. I couldn't stand still. I had to jump up and down to keep my feet from frying.

"And work! When I had a job pushing wheelbarrows of ore for the furnaces, my arms would be so tired I could scarcely lift them at night."

With all the hardships, however, Dixie believes that those days were not without their compensations. They make him enjoy his life today, and enjoy it thoroughly.

“And I really believe that all that lifting work with the wheelbarrows strengthened my forearms for hitting a baseball,” he drawls in his soft southern accent.

Baseball was never far from Walker's thoughts in those days, for his father had been a major-leaguer until he came up with a sore arm. Ewart (Dixie) Walker had pitched for Washington in 1909, 1910, and 1911, and also for numerous minor-league teams including Baltimore, Wilkes-Barre, St. Paul, Milwaukee, Chattanooga, Little Rock, and New Orleans. In addition, Fred's uncle Ernie was an outfielder in the majors with the Philadelphia Phillies and the St. Louis Browns.

The steel company for which Dixie worked was the Tennessee Coal and Iron Company, which adopted the policy of having its employees organize company nines. An intra-company league was formed, with teams representing various departments—the Open Hearth department, the Sales force, the Office outfit, and so on. Fred wanted to be a pitcher; his dad had advised him to be an outfielder; but he wound up a shortstop.

One of Dixie's lifelong friendships in baseball was started in this company league, for it was here that he became acquainted with husky Ben Chapman, a heavy-hitting infielder then, later a major-league outfielder, and who wound up, of all things, as a pitcher with the Brooklyn Dodgers of 1944.

Walker's team, the Open Hearth outfit, was playing the deciding game for the company championship. Chapman was drafted from the furnace tenders to bolster the Open Hearths because of his batting. Being an infielder, Ben was put at shortstop; and Fred was moved to the outfield. The Open Hearth team won the championship; and an immediate friendship sprang up between Fred Walker and Ben Chapman, which is still deep today.

This friendship with Ben is no idle gesture on Dixie's part. He is willing to back his pal to the limit, and he has proved it on occasion.

Always regarded as a peaceful fellow, Walker rarely gets into a fight on the ball field. Whenever he has done so, it has always been to help out a friend.

Such was the case one day when Dixie got mixed up in a scrap in Washington.

He and Chapman were teammates on the New York Yankee team that year, Ben a regular, and

Dixie wanting to be one. The two were firm friends by this time, even to the extent of rooming together on the road.

This day in Washington, the fiery-headed Chapman got snarled up with Buddy Myers of the Senators in a play at second base. Hot words passed between the two, and punches began to fly. Ben was banished from the game.

As the players of both teams milled around the center of the diamond, Manager Joe McCarthy of the Yankees turned to Dixie.

"I guess I'll have to put you in Chapman's place," he said. "You'd better go out to the bull pen and throw a few to loosen up."

Walker dutifully began to obey orders out in the bull pen in left field. Chapman headed for the showers. To reach them he had to go through the Senators' dugout. Someone passed a nasty remark, and Blazing Ben swung from his heels.

In a flash the Washington dugout was a madhouse. Players punched each other with abandon. Spectators spilled out of the stands to join in the fun. Finally the cops arrived to quiet the trouble. When they got there, Dixie was right beside his pal, Ben, and to this day no one knows how he got to the Senators' dugout so fast.

"I was just trying to help Ben out," Walker

declared later. "And believe me he was getting as much of a going-over from the cops as he was from the Senators."

Dixie shook his head sadly. "I don't know why it is," he said, "but I always seem to get myself into trouble helping someone else out of it."

"Once Joe Medwick got in a jam with the Cardinals, and I found myself right in the middle again. And once I even went into the stands to help some ushers who were having a tough time with some customers. I don't ask for trouble; it just seems to happen."

Walker's helping of the ushers was not without just provocation. The four rowdies who started the trouble were found to have knifed some of the boys. They were later arraigned in court, found guilty, and handed stiff sentences.

The paths of Walker and Chapman have intertwined through the years, since they first played together on the steel company team. From that league Ben was signed by Scout Johnny Nee of the Yankees in 1927; and he reported to the late Manager Miller Huggins in 1928. Dixie, two years younger than his pal, was given a \$500 bonus for signing a contract with Birmingham of the Southern Association. Three years later they were together again, this time with the Yankees.

Dixie's first year in organized baseball was truly an indication of his travels to come, for Birmingham shunted him to three different clubs in 1928. Walker played with Albany in the Southeastern League, with Greensboro in the Piedmont League, and with Gulfport in the Cotton States League, winding up with a batting average of .293 for his participation in 82 games.

In spring training the following year Walker suffered the first of his many injuries in baseball. He broke his leg; and by the time he was ready to return to action it was midsummer. Sent to Vicksburg in the Cotton States League, he batted .318 in 61 games.

Back in pre-season training again with Birmingham in 1930, Dixie caught the eye of Clark Griffith, the Washington Senators boss for whom Fred's father had once played.

"That young man is an infielder," said Griff. "He covers the ground well, and either shortstop or third base should be his position."

Consequently Walker found himself with Greenville, South Carolina, where he started as an infielder, only to be shifted to the outfield when one of the regular outfielders failed to hit.

"We didn't carry too many extra players in the minors those days," Dixie declared. "The utility

infielder—there was only one—was put in at my position, and I went to the field to take the place of the guy who wasn't hitting."

Dixie was no less than sensational with Greenville in the Sally League. He appeared in only 73 games, but his batting average was a rousing .401, and his extra-base blows included seventeen doubles, ten triples, and eleven home runs. In addition he stole twenty-two bases.

All this caught the eye of Scout Johnny Nee, the same fellow who had snapped up Chapman for the Yankees. Dixie was bought for immediate release and made the big jump to Class AA ball with Jersey City.

That Nee made no mistake can be seen from Walker's record at Jersey City—a neat .335 average for eighty-three games, with eighteen doubles, nine triples, and seven homers thrown in for good measure.

Walker was ready for the majors now, but the Yankees had no place for him. In spite of an outstanding showing in Manager Joe McCarthy's spring training camp of 1931, Dixie found himself on the way to Toronto after playing two games with the Yanks.

That season he appeared in the line-up for four clubs. He batted .300 for the Yankees in his two

games with them; .352 for his 80 games with Toronto and Jersey City in the International circuit; and .303 for 58 games with Toledo in the American Association.

"I really was tired of the minors by this time," Dixie recalled, "but still the Yankees had no place for me. How was I to break into an outfield whose regulars were Ben Chapman, Earl Combs, and Babe Ruth, and whose first reserves were Sammy Byrd and Myril Hoag?"

Consequently in 1932 Walker again started out in the minors; that season, with the Yanks' newly acquired farm team at Newark, N. J. He was playing his best baseball and thought surely he would be brought up to the parent club, when he was hurt a second time. In attempting a shoestring catch one day in midseason, he unfortunately broke his collarbone.

His hitting was affected, naturally, when he returned to action, but he still wound up with a healthy average of .350.

That decided the Yankee bosses. They agreed with Fred himself that he had had enough of the minors; and when spring training ended in 1933, Dixie remained as an American Leaguer. He became the Yankees' first reserve outfielder, relieving Ruth or Combs in the late innings, and he was

also the club's first-to-be-called-on left-handed pinch hitter.

One day Combs was injured, and Walker moved into a regular spot in the line-up. He fielded his position excellently; and although his hits were not as frequent as they had been in the minors, he was clubbing quite a few homers into Ruthville, that chummy section of the park which lies behind right field.

"There's the successor to Babe Ruth on the Yankees," was the comment heard on all sides during the games.

Walker's hopes were high until one day when he slid into home plate. He landed too heavily on his right shoulder and snapped a ligament. The injury did not seem serious at the time, but it made the next three years the most physically trying of his life.

That season of 1933 he played ninety-eight games for New York. In 1934 he got into the line-up only seventeen times. The following year was even worse; he played in only eight games before Manager McCarthy sent him back to Newark to see if some regular work might get his arm back into shape.

Dixie tried everything—treatment by specialists, rest, extra throwing. Nothing seemed to do

any good. He did play eighty-nine games for the Bears, batting .293; but he knew he wasn't right.

In 1936 Walker was still with the Yankees, but again just a utility outfielder.

One day McCarthy called him into his office.

"Dixie," he began, "I'm sorry to say this, but we'll have to let you go. I still think you can play major-league baseball, and I've sent you to a team I think you can help, the Chicago White Sox."

The real facts behind Walker's trade was that the Yankees had just paid in the neighborhood of \$60,000 for a young West Coast player named Joe Di Maggio. Any baseball fan can figure out the rest of the story.

When McCarthy let him go, Dixie thought it was because his arm was no good and never would be any good. That season with the two clubs, he played only thirty-two games; and his spirit was certainly low.

It was then that Walker took his greatest gamble. He knew that his shoulder was not right; and he realized that nothing he had done for it so far had helped. When White Sox officials suggested an operation, he hesitated; and then jumped in with both feet.

"I'm not much good this way," he reasoned. "The operation might pull me through."

Needless to say it did; and the actual surgery is recognized today as one of the greatest pieces of work ever performed in baseball circles. Dixie describes the operation vividly.

“Dr. Philip Kreuscher was the surgeon, and believe me I owe him a lot,” he declares gratefully. “He cut right through my upper arm and shoulder. He drilled a hole through the bone in my shoulder. Then he took a muscle from somewhere and put it inside the bone to hold my shoulder in place.

“It worked out perfectly. As a matter of fact, Dr. Kreuscher later had me come from Birmingham to Chicago at his expense so that I could be Exhibit A when he lectured to other surgeons on the operation.”

In 1937 Dixie's arm was normal. He had a good year with the White Sox, batting .302 for the full season of 154 games and leading the league in triples with sixteen.

The following winter Dixie was part of one of the biggest player deals of the off-season. He was traded with Vernon Kennedy and Tony Piet to Detroit for Gerald Walker, Marvin Owen, and Mike Tresh.

For a year and a half Walker did a workman-like job with the Tigers. In midseason of 1939,

though, he tore the cartilage in his left knee, and when it relegated him to the bench, Detroit sold him to Brooklyn. The deal has since been called one of Laughing Larry MacPhail's very best investments.

It did not take Dixie long to become one of the greatest idols of Brooklyn's famous fans. In fact he is one of the most popular outfielders in all Dodger history. He has had his "Day" at Ebbets Field, when both he and Billy Jurges were honored by the fans in the stands.

Dixie paid off in 1944. His .357 average was a full ten points higher than the second-place winner, Stan Musial of the St. Louis Cardinals, the 1943 batting king. Walker had 191 hits in 535 at bats, missing just seven games of the campaign.

The popular Dodger outfielder has no startling explanation for his winning of the batting crown.

"I changed my stance slightly," he said, "and I used a little heavier bat. I feel as though a lot of things may have helped, but I don't want to elaborate. I'd rather just take the batting average and leave well enough alone."

Pressed further, Dixie said that he thought probably the biggest reason for his success was that he was a "luckier hitter in 1944" than he ever was before.

"I honestly believe that I wasn't a better hitter—I was just a luckier hitter," he drawled. "I stepped into the ball as I always did, but more drives were dropping safe.

"You know," he continued, "I used to think that I had to place my hits. No more, though. Now, I believe a batter should just meet the ball as hard as he can and let fly where it will. That system worked for me," he smiled.

One day in the summer of 1944, at Boston Braves Field, Dixie hit a double to left, a spot that is usually good for a double by left-handed hitters. The ball dropped just inside the foul line.

"Any other year and that ball would have gone foul," Walker declared. "I didn't try to hit it to left, but just made sure I would hit it squarely. It was a lucky hit, that's all."

Not many of his friends, however, believe Dixie's success is all luck. The Dodger coach, Red Corriden, certainly does not think so. His statement gives the great outfielder plenty of credit:

"Walker right now is the most deadly hitter I've seen, and I'll go back as far as Honus Wagner."

If constant study of great hitters is called luck, then Walker is lucky. He is a hitting analyst, and he has made it a point to find out why such bat-

ters as Ted Williams, Stan Musial, and Paul Waner stayed well in the .300's.

Walker has had many thrills in baseball. "I guess winning the pennant and going into the World Series in 1941 was my greatest thrill," he has said.

But then he begins to think back; and he recalls many more thrills, not the least of which is that of winning the major-league batting championship.

Dixie especially likes to recall the eight hits he made against the New York Giants in two successive nights at Ebbets Field and at the Polo Grounds, respectively.

"The latter game was on Mel Ott night," he laughs, "and I got quite a kick out of getting a homer, a triple, and two singles off Carl Hubbell."

Walker also recalls an incident which may have given the fans a thrill, but one which was not so thrilling to him at the time.

"I was a member of the Yankees at the time," he said, "and this day we were playing Washington. Lou Gehrig was on second base and I was on first. Tony Lazzeri was at bat. It was the ninth inning, and we were behind one run.

"Tony belted a long fly to right center and the ball went over the head of the fielder, who, I think, was Carl Reynolds. In those days Yankee Stadium

had a banking in right field. The ball hit this banking and bounced straight up into the air before Reynolds got it.

"Naturally, not knowing whether the ball was going to be caught or not, Lou tagged up at second and I was nearly down to second. When we saw that the ball had landed safely, we both set sail for home, Lou plowing along as fast as he could and I a foot behind.

"Reynolds' throw arrived at the plate a second before Lou slid across and Luke Sewell tagged him out.

"In that slide, however, Gehrig had spilled Sewell and the two of them lay sprawled all over the plate. I danced up and down trying to find a spot to tag home, but before I could do so, Luke calmly reached out for me and said, "Tag, Dixie, you're it."

"I was 'it' all right," Walker concluded. "I was also out; and the ball game was over."

Dixie was married to Estelle Shea on May 2, 1936, at three o'clock in the morning, just a few hours after he had been notified by Manager McCarthy that he had been traded to Chicago.

"We had planned to be married on May 15," Walker declared, "but the Yankees sort of changed our plans for us. We decided it would be best to

be married before I went West; and we really didn't have much time."

The Walkers have three sturdy children. One boy carries on the name of "Dixie" in earnest; whereas his father and grandfather were merely nicknamed "Dixie," the boy has the name legally. Fred's first-born, now seven years old, was christened Frederick Dixie Walker, and the name may yet be heard from in baseball.

The other two youngsters are Mary Ann, three, and Susan, nineteen months.

Today Dixie and his family are considered well off. Dixie never will discuss his various salaries.

"Those are matters I believe should be talked over only between a player and his manager," he has stated.

He has invested his money wisely, and he derives a year-round income from a business in Rockville Center, Long Island. A lot of his money is drawing interest in various banks, and he has a career in real estate in Birmingham awaiting him when he retires from baseball.

Walker never expects to become a millionaire. In fact, he never really wants to be one.

"Just so long as my family and I are comfortable," he says, "I'll never worry."

It is Dixie's firm belief that ball players should be chary of their investments.

"Don't look for too much interest," he advises. "Be satisfied with a little, and you will be better off in the long run."

With the Walker family, baseball is in the blood. Moreover, it is a family tradition. Father, uncle, and Dixie all made the majors, and it is a matter of pride with the Walkers that Dixie's younger brother, Harry, also made good in the big time. Harry, six years younger than Dixie, was a member of the St. Louis Cardinal outfield and played in two World Series before entering the Army at Fort Shelby, Mississippi, in October, 1943.

Walker has never touched liquor. He never smoked until the winter of 1943-44, when he went to Alaska and toured the Aleutians entertaining servicemen under the auspices of the USO. With him were Danny Litwhiler, Stan Musial, Hank Borowy, and Frankie Frisch.

"I don't know why I smoked then," he declares. "It couldn't have been to keep warm. I still don't smoke very much."

Dixie has a vivid recollection of the season he broke into the majors.

"I recall that the pitchers impressed me tre-

mendously. That George Earnshaw of the Athletics! He could always get me out. His curve ball had me folding like a pretzel; and I never even saw his fast one."

That may have been Walker's impression then. Recently, however, pitchers look more or less alike to him. Some days, one has more stuff than others, but none strikes him with awe.

Yes, the tables are turned today. Instead of Walker it is the pitchers who are worried now.

After all, Dixie Walker and his stout bat haven't been particularly kind to the hurlers' organization.

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FRED (DIXIE) WALKER

Born September 24, 1910, at Villa Rica, Ga. Height, 6.01.

Weight, 175. Throws right and bats left-handed.

Year	Club	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1928	Albany	So'east.	16	66	10	18	2	1	1	8	.273
1928	Greensboro	Pied.	6	18	3	2	...	...	...	1	.111
1928	Gulfport	Cot. St.	82	304	41	89	18	7	1	...	.293
1929	Vicksburg	Cot. St.	61	233	41	74	9	5	2	...	.318
1930	Greenville	So. Atl.	73	307	80	123	17	10	11	63	.401
1930	Jersey City	Int.	83	325	62	109	18	9	7	41	.335
1931	Toledo	A.A.	58	228	33	69	10	2	4	31	.303
1931	New York	Amer.	2	10	1	3	2	0	0	1	.300
1931	Jer. City-Tor.	Int.	80	310	40	109	17	4	6	41	.352
1932	Newark	Int.	144	551	107	193	30	7	15	105	.350
1933	New York	Amer.	98	328	68	90	15	7	15	51	.274
1934	New York	Amer.	17	17	2	2	0	0	0	0	.118
1935	New York	Amer.	8	13	1	2	1	0	0	1	.154
1935	Newark	Int.	89	317	66	93	18	5	17	67	.293
*1936	N. Y.-Chic.	Amer.	32	90	15	26	2	2	1	16	.289
1937	Chicago(a)	Amer.	154	593	105	179	28	16	9	95	.302
1938	Detroit	Amer.	127	454	84	140	27	6	6	43	.308
1939	Detroit(b)	Amer.	43	154	30	47	4	5	4	19	.305
1939	Brooklyn	Nat.	61	225	27	63	6	4	2	38	.280
1940	Brooklyn	Nat.	143	556	75	171	37	8	6	66	.308
1941	Brooklyn	Nat.	148	531	88	165	32	8	9	71	.311
1942	Brooklyn	Nat.	118	393	57	114	28	1	6	54	.290
1943	Brooklyn	Nat.	138	540	83	163	32	6	5	71	.302
1944	Brooklyn	Nat.	147	535	77	191	37	8	13	91	.357

Major League Totals 1136 4439 713 1356 251 71 76 618 .305

* Sold to Chicago White Sox, May, 1936.

(a) Traded to Detroit, December 2, 1937, with Pitcher Vernon Kennedy and Infielder Tony Piet, for Outfielder Gerald Walker, Third Baseman Marvin Owen, and Catcher Mike Tresh.

(b) Claimed by Brooklyn for waiver price, July 24, 1939.

WORLD SERIES RECORD

	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1941 Brooklyn Nat.	5	18	3	4	2	0	0	0	.222

ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

1943 National	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	.000
1944 National	1	4	0	2	0	0	0	1	.500

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**ADDITIONAL RECORDS OF ATHLETES
PRESENTED IN PREVIOUS VOLUMES**

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CHAPTER XV

ADDITIONAL RECORDS OF ATHLETES PRESENTED IN PREVIOUS VOLUMES

IN the interest of completing the careers of outstanding sports personalities who were still active and at the top of the parade and whose stories were contained in the previous eight volumes of this series, we are herewith presenting their later records in alphabetical order.

PATRICIA (PATTY) BERG

(For complete record see **FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES OF TODAY: SEVENTH SERIES**,
by Jerry Nason).

Miss Berg was voted the top women's athlete-of-the-year in the 1943 Associated Press poll, when she had made a comeback after an automobile accident in 1941 that had fractured her left kneecap and lacerated her jaw. Her one-up victory over Dorothy Kirby of Atlanta, Ga., in the thrilling, pressure-filled final round of the women's western open championship of June, 1941, made her the outstanding candidate for the award. After that

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victory she became a lieutenant in the United States Marines. In 1944 she placed fifth in the women's division of the fourth annual Tam O'Shanter tournament in Chicago with a 72-hole total of 331. The tourney was won by Miss Betty Hicks of Long Beach, Calif., with 318.

JAMES J. BRADDOCK

(For complete record see *FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES OF TODAY: FIFTH SERIES*, by LeRoy Atkinson and other sports writers.)

The heavyweight championship he won from Max Baer in 1935, James J. Braddock lost to Joe Louis June 22, 1937, when he was knocked out in the eighth round of a bout held at Chicago. Braddock fought once more, winning a ten-round decision from Tommy Farr of England in New York, and then retired, to be a tavern owner, a manager of boxers, and a referee.

FRANCIS CHARLES BRIMSEK

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: Eighth Series*, by Harold Kaese and other sports writers.)

Year	Club	League	Games	G.A.	Avg.	S.O.	Pen.
1941-42	Boston	N.L.	47	115	2.46	3	0
1942-43	Boston	N.L.	50	176	3.52	1	0
Complete Major League Totals			236	559	2.37	26	0

PLAY-OFF RECORD

1941-42	Boston	N.L.	5	16	3.20	0	0
1942-43	Boston	N.L.	9	33	3.67	0	0
Complete Stanley Cup Play-off							
Totals			43	105	2.44	2	0

(Abbreviations: G.A.—Goals Against; Ave.—Average; S.O.—Shutouts; Pen.—Penalties; N.L.—National League.)

After the 1942-43 season, Brimsek joined the United States Coast Guard. He was stationed at the Curtis Bay, Maryland, base, where for one winter he tended goal for the Coast Guard Cutters. After the 1943-44 season he was shipped out on active duty to the Pacific Theatre.

DONALD BUDGE

(For a complete record see FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES OF TODAY: FIFTH SERIES, by LeRoy Atkinson and other sports writers.)

After being runner-up for the United States men's singles title to Fréd Perry of England in 1936, Donald Budge won the championship in 1937, beating Baron von Cramm of Germany in the final, and also C. Gene Mako in the final in 1938. Budge then turned professional. In the company of other former amateurs, such as Perry, Ellsworth Vines, Bill Tilden, and Vincent Rich-

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ards, he toured this country, England, the European Continent, and Australia, winning most of the professional championships. He entered the laundry business in New York in 1941, but continued to play as a professional. Budge was inducted into the U. S. Army at Denver in February, 1943. He later rose to the rank of lieutenant.

WILLIAM MALCOLM (BILL) DICKEY

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: Seventh Series*, by Jerry Nason; and *Eighth Series*, by Harold Kaese).

Year	Club	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1942	New York	A.L.	82	268	28	79	13	1	2	37	.295
1943	New York	A.L.	85	242	29	85	18	2	4	33	.351
Complete Major League Totals			1735	6166	920	1934	335	72	200	1199	.314

WORLD SERIES RECORD

1942	New York	A.L.	5	19	1	5	0	0	0	0	.263
1943	New York	A.L.	5	18	1	5	0	0	1	4	.278
Complete World Series Totals			38	145	19	37	1	1	5	24	.255

After catching for the New York Yankees for sixteen seasons, Dickey entered the United States Navy in March of 1944 and later was graduated as a full lieutenant from the United States Naval Training School at Fort Schuyler, New York. In the fall of 1944 he participated in the servicemen's "World Series" in the Pacific.

FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES

JOHN SAMUEL VANDER MEER

Born November 2, 1914, at Prospect Park, N. J. Height, 6.00.

Weight, 190. Hazel eyes and light brown hair.

Throws left and bats right-handed.

Entered United States Navy, March 3, 1944.

Year	Club	League	G	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg.
1933	Dayton	Mid. Atl.	32	183	11	10	.524	206	108	87	132	74	4.28
1934	Scranton	NYP	32	164	11	8	.579	171	90	68	108	69	3.73
1935	Scranton	NYP	24	133	7	10	.412	153	89	79	88	90	5.35
1936	Nashville	South.	10	22	0	1	.000	29	22	18	18	25	7.36
1936	Durham	Pied.	30	214	19	6	.760	151	74	63	295	116	2.65
1937	Cincinnati	Nat.	19	84	3	5	.375	63	41	36	52	69	3.86
1937	Syracuse	Int.	17	105	5	11	.313	82	54	39	74	80	3.34
1938	Cincinnati	Nat.	32	225	15	10	.600	177	89	78	125	103	3.12
1939	Cincinnati	Nat.	30	129	5	9	.357	128	76	67	102	95	4.67
1940	Indianapolis*	A.A.	14	105	6	4	.600	76	33	28	109	65	2.40
1940	Cincinnati	Nat.	10	48	3	1	.750	38	24	20	41	41	3.75
1941	Cincinnati	Nat.	33	226	16	13	.552	172	83	71	202	126	2.83
1942	Cincinnati	Nat.	33	244	18	12	.600	188	78	66	186	102	2.43
1943	Cincinnati	Nat.	36	289	15	16	.484	228	102	92	174	162	2.87

Major League Totals 193 1245 75 66 .532 994 493 430 882 698 3.11

* Optioned to Indianapolis, June 28, 1940 and recalled August 29, 1940.

WORLD SERIES RECORD

Year	Club	League	G	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg.
1940	Cincinnati	Nat.	1	3	0	0	.000	2	0	0	2	3	0.00

ALL-STAR GAME RECORD

Year	League	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	Avg.
1938	National	3	1	0	1.000	1	0	0	1	0	0.00
1942	National	3	0	0	.000	2	0	0	4	0	0.00
1943	National	2½	0	0	.000	2	1	0	6	1	0.00
All-Star Game Totals		8¾	1	0	1.000	5	1	0	11	1	0.00

After being sold to the Chicago Cubs by the Boston Red Sox in midseason of 1942, Foxx did not play much more baseball. Severe recurring headaches and sinus trouble prevented his appearing daily in the line-up, and his batting average dropped. He was out of baseball all of the 1943 season, as an oil salesman. He went back with the Cubs at the start of the 1944 season and was on the active list for half the summer. The Cubs took him off the list and made him coach and bull-pen catcher, but released him before the season ended. He finished the year as manager of the Portsmouth Club in the Piedmont League. In February, 1945, Foxx signed a one-year contract as a player with the Philadelphia Phillies.

HANK GOWDY

(For complete record see FAMOUS AMERICAN
ATHLETES OF TODAY: FIRST SERIES,
by Charles H. L. Johnston)

Major Hank Gowdy was honorably discharged from the United States Army in October, 1944, after serving two years as recreation officer at Fort Benning, Georgia. The first major-league baseball player to enlist in World War I in 1917, he

emerged a sergeant after serving in the front-line trenches. He entered the Second World War with the rank of captain. He rejoined the Cincinnati Reds as coach for the 1945 baseball season, replacing Hans Lobert.

CARL OWEN HUBBELL

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: Four Series*, by Charles H. L. Johnston, and *Eighth Series*, by Harold Kaese

Year	Club	League	G	IP	W	L	P.C.	SO	BB	ER/
1942	New York	N.L.	24	157	11	8	.579	61	34	3.96
1943	New York	N.L.	12	66	4	4	.500	31	24	4.91
Complete Major League Totals			535	3591	253	154	.622	1677	725	2.98

Hubbell, the New York Giants' "Meal Ticket," retired from uniformed service in the major leagues after the 1943 season, his sixteenth in succession with the Giants in which he won his 253d big-league victory. He was promoted upstairs to the front office to scout for the club and manage New York's farm system.

ROBERT TYRE (BOBBY) JONES

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: First Series*, by Charles H. L. Johnston, and *Eighth Series*, by Harold Kaese and other sports writers.)

Bobby Jones was commissioned a captain in the Army Air Corps in June, 1942, and was promoted to major in March of 1943. He served overseas in

England as an intelligence officer and was honorably discharged with the rank of lieutenant colonel under the over-age proviso in August of 1944. In civilian life Jones is a lawyer; and he is also a vice president of a New York sporting goods establishment.

LAWSON LITTLE

(For complete record see FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES OF TODAY: FIFTH SERIES, by LeRoy Atkinson and other sports writers.)

The finest triumph scored by Lawson Little since his golfing career as narrated in the fifth volume of this series, was his victory in the United States Open at Canterbury Golf Club in Warrensville, Ohio, in 1940. He and Gene Sarazen were tied at 287 after seventy-two holes, but in an eighteen-hole play-off, Little shot a 70 to Sarazen's 73. Little has now won six national golf titles: the United States amateur in 1934 and 1935; the British amateur in 1934 and 1935; the Canadian Open in 1936; and the United States Open in 1940. He played from Monterey Peninsula, California, in 1941. He is now serving as a lieutenant in the U. S. Navy.

JOE LOUIS

(For complete record see FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES OF TODAY: SIXTH SERIES, by Harold Kaese and other sports writers.)

Until his induction into the Army in 1942, Joe Louis made \$2,378,366 as a prizefighter, and most of his exploits were told in the sixth volume of this series. He rose to the rank of sergeant, and his value for morale purposes was very great. In the Army he gave many exhibitions of boxing, both here and abroad, besides refereeing many bouts.

THEODORE AMAR (TED) LYONS

Year	Club	League	G	IP	W	L	P.C.	H	R	ER	SO	BB	ERA
1942	Chicago	Amer.	20	180	14	6	.700	167	52	42	50	26	2.10
Complete Major League Totals			589	4119	259	226	.534	4451	2039	1685	1063	1112	3.69

On September 28, 1942, Lyons enlisted in the United States Marine Corps and later rose to the rank of lieutenant. In the 1942 season Lyons compiled one of his best records, winding up with his lowest earned-run average, 2.10, in his twenty years with the White Sox, and tying his best previous winning percentage of .700. During the season Ted pitched only once a week, working every Sunday. If he had worked oftener, he would hardly have been more effective.

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ALICE MARBLE

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: Seventh Series*, by Jerry Nason and other sports writers.)

When she won the United States women's tennis title for the third successive year in 1940, and there were no more fields for her to conquer as an amateur, Alice Marble turned professional. She toured the indoor circuit, playing Mary Hardwick of England in most of her exhibitions.

Before leaving amateur ranks, Miss Marble won the national mixed doubles championship with Bobby Riggs in 1940 and the women's doubles championship with Mrs. Sarah Palfrey Cooke in 1940. In all, she won twelve American titles as an amateur. During the war Miss Marble played many matches for charity throughout the country.

JOSEPH MICHAEL (DUCKY) MEDWICK

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: Sixth and Eighth Series*, by Harold Kaese and other sports writers.)

Year	Club	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1942	Brooklyn	N.L.	142	553	69	166	37	4	4	96	.300
*1943	Brooklyn-										
	N.Y.	N.L.	126	497	54	138	30	3	5	70	.279
1944	New York	N.L.	127	490	65	165	24	3	7	84	.337

Complete Major League

Totals 1755 7079 1142 2307 507 113 196 1297 .326

* Bought by the New York Giants for the waiver price on July 16.

After falling below the .300 level in 1943, for the first time in his thirteen-year major-league

career, Medwick came back brilliantly in 1944 to wind up third in the National League batting race behind Brooklyn's Dixie Walker at .357 and Stan Musial of St. Louis Cardinals at .347.

MELVIN THOMAS OTT

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: Seventh Series*, by Jerry Nason, and *Eighth Series*, by Harold Kaese.)

Year	Club	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Avg.
1942	New York	N.L.	152	549	118	162	21	0	30	93	.295
1943	New York	N.L.	125	380	65	89	12	2	18	47	.234
1944	New York	N.L.	120	399	91	115	16	4	26	82	.288
Complete Major League Totals			2560	8933	1784	2732	464	72	489	1776	.306

In 1944 Ott completed his nineteenth season with the New York Giants and his third as club manager. It was getting so that almost every time he stepped to the plate he set some sort of record. He has scored the most home runs, 489, the most runs, 1784, and he has received the most bases on balls, 1777, in National League history. His nineteen years' service with one club ties the senior circuit record. In 1942 he played in 150 or more games for the tenth year, a National League record. His 1776 runs-batted-in are the most in National League annals. He holds the league's record for batting in 100 or more runs for nine years; and the eight years he did the trick (from 1929-36)

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for another record. In 1942 he led his circuit in runs scored, with 118 for the second time in his career; and he was tops in home runs with 30, marking the sixth time he had either held or shared the home-run leadership in his league. Mel's ambition is to hit home run No. 500, a total reached previously only by Babe Ruth and Jimmie Foxx. He has other records, too, in the National loop: he has hit two or more homers in one game 48 times; he has the most extra-base hits, 1025; and he has the most extra bases on long hits, 2075. As for major-league records, he was the first to receive five bases on balls on four occasions, and he was the first major-leaguer to score six runs in one game for the second time.

EDDIE SHORE

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: Fifth Series*, by LeRoy Atkinson and other sports writers.)

During the 1939-40 National Hockey League season, the Boston Bruins traded their brilliant defenseman, Eddie Shore, to the New York Americans for Eddie Wiseman. In this same year Shore bought the Springfield Indians club in the American Hockey League. In 1940-41 he withdrew entirely from play in the National League and played only with his own team. His National League scoring record completed:

Year	Team	Gls	Assts	Pts	Pen
1937-38	Boston	3	14	17	42
1938-39	Boston	4	14	18	37
1939-40	Bos.-Amer.	4	4	8	13
Complete Major League Totals		117	181	298	1129

When the United States Army took over the Springfield Arena in 1942, Shore moved his team to Buffalo and renamed it "The Bisons." In 1942-43 and in 1943-44 his Buffalo sextet won the championship of the American Hockey League.

CECIL SMITH

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: Sixth Series*, by Harold Kaese and other sports writers.)

Until the war interrupted polo, the hard-riding Texan, Cecil Smith, was one of the game's dominant figures. He was given a 10-goal ranking in 1938, 1939, and 1940. He was prevented from playing in the International Matches between Great Britain and the United States at Meadow Brook Club, Long Island, in June, 1939, because of an injury sustained in practice. Nevertheless, the United States team won two successive matches to retain the International Polo Challenge Cup.

GUS SONNENBERG

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: Second Series*, by Charles H. L. Johnston, and *Eighth Series*, by Harold Kaese and other sports writers.)

On September 12, 1944, Gus Sonnenberg died of an incurable disease in a Navy hospital. He had

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been serving in the United States Navy as a Chief Specialist in the physical training program.

BILL TILDEN

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: First Series*, by Charles H. L. Johnston.)

In 1944, Tilden, whose exploits were described in the very first volume of this series, was still going strong in tennis at the age of fifty-two. He appeared in many benefit matches and proved he could still play championship tennis. A tennis teacher in Los Angeles now, Tilden represents a national sporting-goods manufacturing concern on the West Coast.

HENRY ELLSWORTH VINES

(For complete record see *FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES: THIRD SERIES*, by Leroy Atkinson and Austen Lake)

Ellsworth Vines, the sensational young Californian tennis star who had won at Wimbledon and at Forest Hills, turned professional in the mid-thirties; and although he was beaten by Bill Tilden in his pro debut in Madison Square Garden, Vines was victorious over the old master on their long road tour. In 1936 Vines defeated Lester R. Steofen on another professional tour. In 1937 Vines and Frederick J. Perry of England

were matched, and a series of magnificently played matches resulted in honors being split, Vines and Perry each winning thirty-seven victories.

These two stars were matched again in 1938. Although the players were practically on even terms for the greater part of the tour, Vines towards the end forged ahead, to win by forty-nine matches to thirty-five.

After this Vines forsook the tennis world for that of golf. He soon proved his ability on the golf links of the country. Although he did not win any major championships, he was a threat in every tourney he entered. He grew to prefer golf, and declared he would never go back to tennis. "If I had known how easy golf was," he said on one occasion, "I never would have played tennis."

Early in 1945, Vines was ordered by his draft board to report to Fort Logan, Colorado, for his physical examination. He is married; and the father of one child.

MRS. HAZEL HOTCHKISS WIGHTMAN

(For complete record see FAMOUS AMERICAN
ATHLETES OF TODAY: FIFTH SERIES,
by LeRoy Atkinson and other sports writers.)

For her continued interest in tennis and her development of young players in New England,

340 FAMOUS AMERICAN ATHLETES

Mrs. Hazel H. Wightman has come to be widely loved in the ranks of women's tennis. Since her story was told in the fifth volume of this series, she has won three more national championships, boosting her total to 35. With Miss Edith Sigourney of Brookline she won the women's veterans' doubles championships in 1940 and 1944, and with Miss Pauline Betz of Winter Park, Florida, she won the National women's indoor doubles championship in 1942. The war halted the Wightman Cup matches after the 1939 series.

RUDOLPH PRESTON (RUDY) YORK

(For complete record see *Famous American Athletes of Today: Sixth and Eighth Series*, by Harold Kaese and other sports writers.)

Year	Club	League	G	AB	R	H	2B	3B	HR	RBI	Ave.
1942	Detroit	A.L.	153	577	81	150	26	4	21	90	.266
1943	Detroit	A.L.	155	571	90	155	22	11	34	118	.271
1944	Detroit	A.L.	151	583	77	167	27	7	18	198	.276
Complete Major League Totals			1113	4082	667	1160	211	37	221	849	.281

In 1943 York led the major leagues in home runs with 34, and paced the American League in runs-batted-in with 118. Still the Detroit Tigers' regular first baseman, York was regarded as one of the top right-handed power hitters in the game.

Following is a list of other athletes whose stories were told in previous volumes of this series and

who since have entered the United States armed forces. The list does not include major-league baseball players who joined the services. Their names will be found in a separate appendix, together with such information about their ranks and branches of service as it has been possible to secure.

Wilmer Allison, Army.
Don Budge, Army Air Forces.
Glenn Cunningham, Navy.
Clint Frank, Army Air Forces.
Helen Hicks, Navy.
Helen Jacobs, Navy.
Don Lash, Navy.
Lawson Little, Navy.
Joe Louis, Army.
Charles Paddock, Army.*
Endicott Peabody, Navy.
Gregory Rice, Merchant Marine.
Robert L. Riggs, Army.
Frank Shields, Army.
Eddie Tolan, Army.
Forrest G. Towns, Army.
Harry E. Wilson, Army.

* Deceased.

MAJOR-LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS IN THE ARMED SERVICES

AMERICAN LEAGUE

BOSTON

Herbert Bremer, C, Army	Earl Johnson, P, Army
Mace Brown, P, Navy	Don C. Lang, INF, Army Air Corps
Wilburn R. Butland, P, Army	Roy Partee, C, Army
Paul Campbell, OF, Army	Edw. C. Pellagrini, INF, Navy
Thomas Carey, INF, Navy	John Pesky, INF, Navy
Ken Chapman, INF, Army	Lawrence Powell, P, Army
Dominic Di Maggio, OF, C.G.	Frank A. Pytlak, C, Navy
Joe Dobson, P, Army	Vern Richard, C, Navy
Robert Doerr, INF, Army	James Tabor, INF, Army
Danny Doyle, C, Army	Charles Wagner, P, Navy
Albert Flair, INF, Army	Harold Wagner, C, Army
Andrew Gilbert, OF, Army Air Force	Theo. Williams, OF, Marine Corps
Maurice Harris, P, Army	
Tex Hughson, P, Army	

CHICAGO

Luke Appling, INF, Army	Walter Navie, P, Army
George Dickey, C, Naval Aviation	Leonard Perme, P, Navy
Stanley Goletz, INF, Army	David E. Philley, OF, Army
Chester Hadjuk, INF, Navy	Vincent Plumbo, P, Army
Ralph C. Hamner, P, Navy	Gerald Riffenburg, P, Navy
Val Heim, OF, Naval Aviation	John D. Rigney, P, Navy
Murrell Jones, INF, Navy	Peter Sharp, INF, Army
Robert Kennedy, INF, Marine Corps	Edgar Smith, P, Army
Don Kolloway, INF, Army	Donald Spyker, P, Army
Doyle Lade, P, Coast Guard	Eugene Stack, P, Army (Deceased)
Dario Lodigiani, INF, Army Air Corps	Jack Teagan, P, Army
Ted Lyons, P, Marine Corps	Thurman Tucker, OF
William Mueller, OF, Naval Aviation	Leo Wells, INF, Coast Guard
	Sam West, OF, Army Air Corps
	Taft Wright, OF, Army
	Don Yohe, INF, Navy

CLEVELAND

Jim Bagby, P, Merchant Marine
Horace Brightman, C, Naval Air Force
Clarence Campbell, OF, Army Air Corps
Earl Center, P, Army
Jack Conway, INF, Navy
Lovill Dean, P, Army
Gene Desautels, C, Marine Corps
Henry Edwards, OF, Army
Harry Eisenstat, P, Army
Robert Feller, P, Navy
Thomas Ferrick, P, Navy
Vern Freiburger, INF, Navy
James Hegan, C, Coast Guard
Richard Klein, P, Navy
Vern Kohler, P, Army
Joe Krakauskas, P, Canadian Air Corps
Robert Lemon, INF, Navy
Cliff Mapes, OF, Navy
Colonel B. Mills, OF, Army Air Corps
David Paynter, P, Navy
Wm. E. Robinson, INF, Navy (Athletic Instructor)
Franklin Schulz, INF, Army
Ted Sczpekowski, INF, C.G.
Elmer Sidlo, INF, Army
Bryan Stephens, P, Army
Winslow Stroupe, P, Navy
Ralph Weigel, C, Coast Guard
Gene Woodling, OF, Navy

DETROIT

Al Benton, P, Navy
James Bloodworth, INF, Army
Tom Bridges, P, Army
Roy J. Clark, P, Army Air Force Ground Crew
Richard Dresser, INF, Army
Joseph Erautt, C, Army
Walter A. Evers, INF, Army Air Force
Murray Franklin, INF, Navy
Clarence Gann, P, Navy
Charles Gehringer, INF, Navy
Ted Gray, P, Navy
Henry Greenberg, OF, Army
Ned Harris, OF, Navy
Robert Henny, INF, Army
Wm. Hitchcock, INF, Army Air Force
Robert Hogue, P, Navy
Fred Hutchinson, P, Navy
George W. Lake, P, Army
John Lipon, INF, Navy
Wm. McClaren, INF, Navy
Wm. B. McCosky, OF, Aviation Cadet U. S. N. Reserve
Lambert D. Meyer, INF, Army Air Force
Anse W. Moore, OF, Army
John Mueller, OF, Army
Leslie Mueller, P, Army
Pat Mullin, OF, Army
Robert Patrick, OF, Army
Ray Radcliff, OF, Navy
Wm. Radulovich, INF, Army
Harvey Riebe, C, Army
George Tebbetts, C, Army Air Force
Virgil Trucks, P, Navy
George Uhle, P, Army
Victor Wertz, OF, Army
Hal White, P, Navy
Joe Wood, INF, Navy

Richard Wakefield, OF, Navy
Wakefield honorably discharged from Navy July 13, 1944.

Finished season with Detroit.
Reinducted into Navy in November, 1944.

NEW YORK

Rinaldo Ardizoia, P, Army
Tom Byrne, P, Navy (Com.)
Spurgeon Chandler, P, Army
Bill Dickey, C, Navy
Joseph Di Maggio, OF, Army
Air Force
Joe Gordon, INF, Army
John A. Hassett, INF, Naval
Reserve
Rollie Hemsley, C, Army
Thomas D. Henrich, OF, C.G.
Wm. Johnson, INF, Navy
Herbert Karpel, P, Army
Charles Keller, OF, Merchant
Marine
Al Lyons, P, Navy

Henry Majeski, INF, C.G.
Steve Peek, P, Army
Phil Rizzuto, INF, Naval Reserve
Aaron Robinson, C, Coast Guard
Charles H. Ruffing, P, Army Air
Force
Marius Russo, P, Army
Kenneth Sears, C, Navy
George Selkirk, OF, Navy
Kenneth Silvestri, C, Army
Steve Souchock, INF, Army
Charles Stanceu, P, Army
John Sturm, INF, Army
Jake Wade, P, Navy
Roy Weatherly, OF, Army

PHILADELPHIA

Vernon Benson, INF, Army
Herman Besse, P, Army
Louis N. Blair, INF, Army Air
Force
Charles Bowles, P, Army
Al Brancato, INF, Navy
Norman Brown, P, Army
Fred Caligiuri, P, Army
James V. Castiglia, C, Army
(Cavalry)
Sam Chapman, OF, Navy
Louis Ciola, P, Navy
Tom Clyde, P, Army
Joseph Coleman, P, Naval Aviation
E. T. Collins, Jr., OF, Navy
Orge Pat Cooper, C, Army
Lawrence Davis, INF, Navy
(Physical Instructor)
Hal Epps, OF

Everett Fagan, P, Army
Richard Fowler, P, Army
(Canadian)
Joseph Gantenbein, INF, Army
Robert Harris, P, Navy
Rankin Johnson, P, Navy
Jack H. Knott, P, Army
Bruce Konopka, INF, Naval
Reserve
Bert Kuczynski, P, Navy
Phil Marchildon, P, RCAF Air
Crew (Canadian)
Benny McCoy, INF, Navy
Cal C. McIrvin, P, Army
Raymond Poole, OF, Army
Don Richmond, INF, Army
Robert Savage, P, Army
Pete Suder, INF, Army
Elmer Valo, OF, Army
Porter Vaughan, P, Army

Jack Wallaesa, INF, Army Air Corps George Yankowski, C, Army

ST. LOUIS

Peter Appleton, P, Navy	Bernard Lutz, OF, Navy
George Archie, INF, Army	Glenn R. McQuillen, OF, Navy
John Berardino, INF, Navy	Al Milnar, P, Army
Frank Biscan, P, Navy	Robert Neighbors, INF, Army
Paul Dean, P	Aviation Cadet
Robert Dillinger, INF, Army	Maurice Newlin, P, Navy
Robert Doyle, P, Army	Fred Sanford, P, Army
John Frye, INF, Army	Henry Schmulbach, INF, Army
Joseph Grace, OF, Navy	Bill Seinsoth, P
Henry Helf, C, Navy	Charles A. Stevens, Jr., INF,
Clarence Iott, P, Army	Army
Walter Judnich, OF, Army	Steve Sundra, P, Army
Ardys Keller, C, Army	Albert White, OF, Army
John Lucadello, INF, Navy	Al Zarilla, OF

WASHINGTON

Louis Bevilacqua, P, Army	Walter Masterson, P, Naval Re-
Forrest Brewer, P, Army	serve
John Bucek, OF, Army	Phil L. McCullough, P, Navy
Bruce Campbell, OF, Army Air	Robert Morem, INF, Army
Corps	Ronnie Miller, INF, Army
Jake Early, C, Army	Gerald Priddy, INF, Army
Elmer Gedeon, OF, Army	Danny Reagan, C, Navy
Carlton Hoberg, C, Army	Charles Roberts, INF, Army
Signey C. Hudson, P, Army Air	Sherrard Robertson, INF, Navy
Corps	John Sanford, INF, Army
Joe Jacobs, INF, Army	Rae Scarborough, P, Navy
Alex Kampouris, INF, Army	Louis Thuman, P, Army
William Kennedy, P, Army	Cecil Travis, INF, Army
Ed Kubuski, OF, Army	James Trimble, P, Marine Corps
John K. Lewis, Jr., INF, Army	Mickey Vernon, INF, Navy
Edward Lyons, INF, Navy	Early Wynn, P, Army
Theodore Madjeski, C, C.G.	

**MAJOR-LEAGUE BASEBALL PLAYERS
IN THE ARMED SERVICES**

NATIONAL LEAGUE

BOSTON

Lawrence Clement, 2b, Army	Gene Patton, SS, Army
Robert S. Detweiler, 3b, Army	William J. Posedel, P, Navy
Thomas F. Earley, P, Navy	Albert Roberge, 2b, Army
Froilan Fernandez, SS	Carvel Rowell, 2b, Army
Wallace Fletcher, SS, Army	Connie Ryan, 2b, Navy
Samuel Gentile, OF, Navy	John Sain, P, Navy
Louis Grempp, 1b, Navy	Sebastian Sisti, 3b, Coast Guard
Arthur Johnson, P, Navy	Warren Spahn, P, Army
Frank Lamanna, P, Army	Louis Tost, P, Navy
Max Macon, 1b, Army	Jas. Trexler, P, Navy
Raymond Martin, P, Army	James Wallace, P, Army
John McCarthy, 1b, Navy	Max West, OF, Army
Frank McElyea, 3b and OF, Army	Chet. Wieczorek, OF, Army
	Robert Williams, P, Navy

BROOKLYN

Rex E. Barney, Army	Gene Hermanski, OF, NAF
Boyd Bartley, SS, Army	Kirby Higbe, P, Army
Lester Burge, 1b, Army	Gilbert Hodges, Marines
Alex Campanis, Navy	Chester Kehn, P, Army
Hugh Casey, P, Navy	Harry Lavagetto, 3b, Navy
Claude Corbitt, SS, Army	Gene Mauch, AAF
Clifford Dapper, C, Navy	Cal McLish, P, Army
Lloyd Dietz, P, AAF	Don Padgett, OF, Navy
Alfred Falzone, P, Coast Guard	Harold Reese, SS, Navy
Herman Franks, C, Navy	Harold Reiser, OF, Army
Lawrence French, P, Navy	Lewis Riggs, 3b, Army
John Graham, OF, AAF	John Rizzo, OF, Navy
Joseph Hatten, P, Navy	Stan Rojek, SS, Army
Christopher Haughey, Army	Wm. Sayles, P, Army
Edw. Head, P, Army	Jos. Soskovic, Navy
Wm. Herman, 2b, Navy	

CHICAGO

Dale Alderson, P, Navy
Hi Bithorn, P, Navy
Seymour Block, 3b, Coast Guard
Marvin Felderman, C, Navy
Leslie (Bill) Fleming, P, Army
Chas. Gilbert, OF, Navy
Alban Glossop, 2b, Navy
Emil Kush, P, Navy
Clyde McCullough, C, Navy
John McPartland, P, MM
Russell Meers, P, Navy
Vern J. Olsen, P, Navy
Mizell Platt, OF, Navy
Marvin Rickert, OF and 1b,
Coast Guard
Robert Scheffing, C, Navy
John Schmitz, P, Navy
Louis Stringer, 2b, Army
Robert Sturgeon, SS, Navy
Edward Waitkus, 1b, Army
Benjamin Warren, C, Navy

CINCINNATI

Robert Adams, 2b, Army
Frank Baumholtz, Navy
Joe Beggs, P, Navy
Ewell Blackwell, P, Army
Leonard Bobeck, Navy
George Burpo, P, Navy
Jack Cassini, Army
Worthington Day, Army
Mike Dejan, OF, Army
Linus Frey, 2b, Army
Bert Haas, OF, Army
Van Harrington, INF, Army
Millard Howell, P, Army
Ray Lamanno, C, Navy
Clayton B. Lambert, P, Army
Ed Lukon, Army
Robert Malloy, P
Max Marshall, OF, Navy
Myron McCormick, OF, Army
Jacob Niemes, P, Navy
Kent Peterson, Army
Kenneth Polivka, P, Navy
James Prendergast, P, Army
Henry Sauer, 1b, CG
Cecil Scheffel, Army
Wm. Mike Schultz, OF, Army
Eddie Shokes, 1b, Navy
Clyde Shoun, P, Navy
Gene Thompson, P, Navy
Milton Ticco, Army
John Vander Meer, P, Navy
Clyde Vollmer, OF, Army
Richard West, C, Navy
Francis Wilson, P, Army
Benny Zientara, 2b, Army

NEW YORK

Morris Arnovich, OF, Army
Richard Bartell, INF, Navy
Robert Blattner, 2b, Navy
William Bobo
Victor Bradford, P, Navy
Robert Carpenter, P, Army
R. F. Coombs, Navy
Harry Danning, C, Army
John H. Davis, 3b, Army
Howard DeMartini
Hugh East, P, Navy
Charles Fox, C, Navy
Robert M. Foxx, OF, Navy
Sid Gordon, 3b, C.G.
Thomas Gorman, P, Army
Eddie Hoffman

David Koslo, P, Army
Robbie Linderman
Willard Marshall, OF, Marines
James Maynard, OF, Army
John Mize, 1b, Navy
Van Mungo, P, Army
Peter Pavich, 2b, Army

Fred Price
Wm. Rigney, Navy
Harold Schumacher, P, Navy
Ken Trinkle, Army
Nick Witek, 2b, Army
Robert Wooten
Norman R. Young, 1b, C.

PHILADELPHIA

John A. Behrends, OF, C.G.
William Burich, SS, Army
Delmar Ennis, Navy
Geo. Eyrich, Navy
Edwin C. Freed, Jr., OF, Army
Walter T. Frye, SS, Army
Jos. George, Navy
Lee Grissom, P, Army
Ray Hamrick, P, Navy
Al Hodkey, P, Army
Frank Hoerst, P, Navy
Thomas Hughes, P, Army
Dale E. Jones, P, Navy
Si Johnson, P, Navy
Ernest Koy, OF, Navy
Jack Kraus, P, Navy

Andrew Lapihuska, Army
Tony Lupien, INF, Navy
Joseph A. Marty, OF, Army
Merrill May, INF, Navy
Dee Moore, OF, Army
Emmett Mueller, OF, Army
Hugh Mulcahy, P, Army
Richard Mulligan, P, Army
Edward Murphy, Navy
Bernard Mussill, P, Army
Samuel Nahem, P, Army
Ron Northey, OF, Army
Isaac Pearson, P, Marines
William Peterman, C, Army
Lynwood Rowe, P, Navy

PITTSBURGH

Ed Albosta, P, Army
Al. Anderson, INF, Navy
Wm. P. Baker, C, Navy
Russ Bauers, P, Army
Wm. G. Brandt, P, Navy
Peter P. Castiglione
William Clemensen, P, Army
Jas. Cullinane, Navy
J. Addis Copple, P, Army
William R. Cox, SS, Army
Elbie Fletcher, INF, Navy
Henry Gornicki, P, Army
Jack Hallett, P, Navy
Kenneth Heintzelman, P, Army
Jas. Hopper, Army

Lee Howard
J. McDonald Kerr, P, C.G.
Ralph Kiner, P, NAF
Bob Klinger, P, Navy
Stephen Korpa
John Lanning, P, Army
Edgar Leip, 2b, Army
Culley Rikard, OF, Army
Vincent Smith, C, Navy
Oadis Swigart, P, Army
Maurice Van Robays, OF, Army
Jas. Walsh
Burgess Whitehead, 2b, Army
Alden J. Wilkie, P, Army

ST. LOUIS

John A. Beazley, Jr., P, Army	Fred Martin, P, Army
Alpha Brazle, P, Army	Terry Moore, OF, AAF
James Brown, INF, Army	George Munger, P, Army
Frank Crespi, 2b, Army	Stan Musial, OF, Navy
Joffre J. Cross, SS, Navy	Henry Nowak, P, Army
Murray Dickson, P, Army	Howard Pollet, P, AAF
Ervin F. Dusak, OF, Army	Fred Schmidt, P
Wm. F. Endicott, OF, Army	Walter Sessi, OF, Army
John Grodzicki, P, Army	Enos Slaughter, OF, Army
Vernal Jones, Marines	Max Surkont, P, Navy
Louis Klein, INF, C.G.	Harry Walker, OF, Army
George F. Kleine, P, Navy	Ernest White, P, Army
Howard Krist, P, Army	John Wyrostek, P. Army

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