

Show Off

By Paul Ketelsen

It is spring and what does spring bring among other things? You're right, baseball!

Now I'm not a real baseball fan, but then staying away from a game is like getting my teeth pulled. It wasn't exactly time for the season, but there's spring training, so of course I'd slip off to go watch the boys. I always did like to see them in action.

This particular morning I went down the street to the ball park. It was the first day, and I was curious to see what they had to play with this season. I didn't see much of what they had because an old fellow began telling me a long yarn the moment I sat down.

I sat down beside him and began to chat about the team's chances of winning the pennant. Baseball was in his blood. I could tell by the way his eyes lighted up at a good play and how they frowned on a bad one. It was during the rest period that he began to unlimber his yarn.

It happened a long time ago, he said, but I can see it right now. The season was pretty good to this certain team; they had plenty of good players, one in particular. His name? Well, it isn't important now. He was a cockey young chap that wouldn't quit. He had all it takes to play good ball. A slugger, a runner and a good fly chaser.

I began to get uneasy. Was this guy going to talk all day and not say anything? Well, just about that time he began to tell about the last game of this certain chap.

We were playing at home, he said. The home team was in high class condition and it was the pennant game. The game wasn't going to be easy, but they knew they would win.

The umpire called the game and it started. Callan, the leadoff socked one that nearly took the glove off the short stop's hand, but after a moment's juggling he finally threw to first. It was too late and they had a man on first. Our pitcher settled down then and the next two men up went down swinging. The fourth man

caught the apple just right and over the fence it went. Two runs.

It's a cinch that both you and I know that two runs in the first inning of a pennant game is something, but this old fellow went right on as if nothing had happened. Everything, he said, went along swell, the game was still two and nothing but there were still four more innings to go. We got a run in the sixth but in the eighth we were still one run behind. The boys were beginning to get worried.

The young chap was still as cocky as ever. He didn't suspect that his cockiness had rubbed the boss the wrong way. This game was his last chance to quit clowning and settle down. Yeah! I know I said he was good and he was, when he wanted to be good. That was the reason the boss was getting a little fed up and was willing to ship him back to the minors. This game was to tell the story. Everyone on the team knew it but him.

The ninth and last inning rolled around. The first three men up were, Jake, Willie and this kid I'm telling you about. This was a piece of luck for the kid because he was following two good men. All he had to do was hit the ball.

Jake got a double and Willie singled. That put Jake on third and Willie on first. The youngster came up to the plate swinging two bats and singing a song. Yeah! he was like that—always happy.

The first pitch went by for a called strike. The next a little wide for a ball. The third came in and broke fast; the kid, nearly swung himself around trying to hit it. The count was two and one. But it only takes one to hit the ball, so the guy was still grinning. The next came over for a called ball. Two and two. By this time everyone in the stands was up and shouting for him to clout the apple.

The pitcher dusted off his hands, took a firm grip on the ball and sent it down the alley. I mean right in the groove. Just what the batter wanted. He saw it coming and braced himself for the swing. How that boy swung,

his heart, his soul went into that bat. The stands roared with new fever, then died quickly. He has missed.

The game was over, and the youngster was through. He was back in the minors. This hurt him so badly that he gave up baseball. He would have had to quit the next year anyway, a train ran over his leg and they had to amputate.

Practice was over so we got up to leave. I wasn't so satisfied with the story, but it seemed to have pleased the old man that I would listen.

As he left, he turned and waved and then limped off.

THE CASE HISTORY OF A LOAN OR HOW TO WIN ENEMIES AND AVOID CREDITORS

Saturday—Gee, thanks, pal. Pay you back tonight. Any time I can do a favor for you . . .

Tonight—(Indicates silence on question of two bucks.)

Tuesday—Say, that's right. Almost forgot. Well, I'm expecting a check Friday.

Friday—Do you have to bother me now? Really awfully busy.

Next Monday—My God! You act as if I wan's going to pay you!

Following Wed.—All right, all right—don't get huffy.

Fri. again—There for God's sake! I hope that will satisfy you. What a Midas you turned out to be. Well, you can't say I never came across for you.

—Punch Bowl

Smart. Got something in your eye? Smarter: No, I'm just trying to look through my thumb.

—Exchange

Toastmaster (introducing the speaker)—I'm sure that Mr. Jones of the Soils and Fertilizer Department, will give us a pleasant half-hour. He's just full of his subject.

—Whirlwind