



HOW TO PLAY BASEBALL



THE NATIONAL GAME.

278

HOW TO PLAY BASEBALL

BY THE GREATEST
BASEBALL PLAYERS

ILLUSTRATED

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THE CATCHER

By OSCAR STANAGE

I

THE CATCHER

CATCHING a ball and throwing it is part of the catcher's job, but not all by any means, and after you have read several paragraphs of this chapter you will discover that it is only a small part of it.

Catching demands one-third ability and two-thirds mental work. It is the part of you that does the thinking that counts behind the bat. Many catchers have succeeded in holding positions in the major leagues, while others, who could throw better and hit better, remained in the minor leagues. It is all in the amount and kind of thinking that you do.

To catch a ball, let it hit the glove first and close your hand over it. Do that and you will know how to catch. And when you know that,

start thinking and keep on thinking. The more you think the better you will catch.

One thing the catcher must learn to do, and that is to know his pitchers. The first thing you want to find out when you are to catch is what curves the pitcher can throw. Some have a good fast ball that breaks, others have a slow ball, while still others can use a good curve. You can find out what the pitchers have by warming them up. Get them to pitch to you as if they were pitching to a man at the plate. Let them pitch for fifteen minutes or more, and let them pitch everything they can. You will soon discover that there is one ball in which each pitcher excels.

Again, a pitcher may be able to pitch several kinds of balls. You know that he has two or three good deliveries. On some days his curve will be working better than his fast ball, and on other days you will find out that his fast ball works better than his curve. Always

manage to find out what a pitcher has that is working unusually well on the day he pitches, and get him to rely chiefly on that kind of ball during the game.

To give you an illustration of this point, I want to recall to you an incident that happened to Detroit late in the season of 1911. The Detroit club secured from the Texas League a young pitcher named Wiley Taylor. We had him with us on a short road trip, and I warmed him up one afternoon. He pitched a dandy curve to me, but did not seem to have a good fast ball or slow ball. Several days later when we played in Detroit, Manager Jennings sent Taylor in to pitch. I did not warm him up before that game, but since I had warmed him up in Chicago I thought I could easily guess what he should pitch to fool the batters. So when the first inning started I asked for a curve ball. But what he pitched was nothing like the curve ball he

pitched to me in Chicago a few days before. It did not have the curve. He tried his best to throw me a curve ball. The first St. Louis batter that faced Taylor walked. There were three balls and two strikes on the next batter when the man on first base started for second. I signaled for a fast ball and got it. I threw to second in time to get the runner stealing, while the umpire called the batter out on strikes. A fielder's error allowed the next batter to reach first base. Taylor could not get the ball over the plate for the fourth man who came to bat, and he also got a base on balls. The fifth batter hit at a bad ball and flied out.

It was the same kind of a story in the second inning. I continually asked for a curve, hoping that it would start to break right; but it became weaker if anything, and I thought that Taylor would soon be hit hard.

When we took the field for the third inning,

I decided to switch. I asked for a fast ball. I got it. The fast ball that this young pitcher threw had a break to it almost as big as the curve he had been throwing. It was a beauty. For the rest of the game I continued signaling for fast balls, and four hits is all St. Louis got off Taylor's fast ones.

Of course every boy who catches on a team knows about signals. You know how to signal your pitcher for certain kinds of balls. It is always best not to be content with one set of signals. Get several. During the season of 1911 I had seven distinct and different sets of signals for the pitchers I worked with. It often happens that some team will catch on to your signals and then the extra sets come in very handy.

Now you know what your pitcher has, and you know how to signal him, so the next thing is to know when to signal for certain pitched balls. That is where some of that two-thirds

mental ability that I mentioned in the beginning of my story comes in.

To know when to ask for certain pitched balls a catcher has to know the batter, and you can get acquainted with his batting habits by studying him. Judge him when he steps to the plate.

Baseball players are divided into two classes—low ball hitters and high ball hitters. Sometimes you find an entire team that can hit a low ball better than a high ball, or the opposite. The champion Philadelphia Athletics are recognized as a team of high ball hitters. Nearly all of their effective hitting is on balls pitched waist high or higher; and to be effective against them a pitcher must keep his delivery low.

In working a pitcher do not ask for too many curve balls. There are some pitchers who are most effective with a curve, but mix the signals so that he will vary the curve with

another kind of delivery. The general rule to be followed is, "*Do not ask a pitcher for a curve ball unless absolutely necessary.*" Some catchers ask for curves on an average of three out of five times. This simply means they believe that curve balls alone can fool a batter, which is a sad mistake. These catchers often "curve a pitcher out of the big leagues" as we call it, meaning that they make him pitch curved balls until his arm becomes useless.

Always try to have the pitcher work with you. Have an object in asking for every ball you signal for.

Do not hold your glove where you expect to receive the ball. If you have asked the pitcher to deliver a ball waist high to the batter, do not reach out your glove at the height of the batter's waist and yell to the pitcher, "Put her there, old fellow, put her there!" If you have asked for such a ball,

hold your glove high or low. If you hold it in the position where you expect to receive the ball, it tips the coachers off and they are liable to tell the batter what you are expecting. If the coachers are looking for a high ball because you are holding your hands high, and signal the batter that a high ball is coming, when you have signaled for a low ball, do you see how the batter will be deceived? He is set to meet a high ball and finds a low pitched ball coming at him. He can't change his position quick enough to meet the ball, and nine times out of ten he will be forced to swing at it, because his mind was fully made up to meet it before he discovered that the coacher had made a mistake. *Try never to hold your glove where you expect the pitched ball to reach you.*

When men are on second and third and two men are out: Supposing the batter is a good hitter; also suppose that there are two balls

and no strikes on him. Now what do you think the batter expects the next pitched ball to be? A fast one, of course, because it is easier to get a fast ball over the plate than a curve ball. Here is where you want to signal your pitcher for a curve; you will be fooling the batter. If he strikes at it he will swing on the ball as though it was a fast one, and he will miss it nine times out of ten. If your pitcher does not happen to have a good breaking curve, make the batter strike at bad balls. He is a good batsman and he knows it; he also realizes that there are two men out; he sees a runner prancing up and down at third, and another anxious to break away from second and score on a hit. A short single will score both men. It may win the game. The batter is eager to hit; it is expected of him, and he will strike at bad balls because of these reasons.

It is always good policy to let a star batter

walk in a pinch, but never let him walk with two men out unless the score is close,—three to two or two to one, something like that. There are exceptions to this rule, of course, and batters like Lajoie, Cobb, and Jackson in the American League are fair examples. You can let a man like that walk with two men out if he has a mediocre batter following him.

Now a few moments' attention to base runners. With a base occupied you should be the man to give the signals to catch the runner off base. Do all the signaling on men leading off first, second, or third base. Have separate signals, and see that the first baseman, second baseman, shortstop, and third baseman work with you.

Supposing there is one man out and a runner on second base. The shortstop should hold him close to the bag. If the batter bunts at the first ball pitched and misses it, you can see in a flash that the batter is trying to sac-

rifice that runner to third. He had his instructions to bunt. Since he bunted at the first pitched ball and missed it, it is certain that he will bunt at the next one. Watch the runner on second. If he is watching the batter keenly, or if he is making a nervous start toward third, you have double evidence that the batter is expected to bunt, so your play is to ask the pitcher to waste a ball. By "wasting" a ball we mean throwing it wide of the plate,—not trying to pitch to the batter. Before you signal your pitcher to waste the ball, signal your shortstop that he is to receive a throw. Get his answer that he is ready to make the play, and then tell your pitcher to waste the ball. You will get the waste ball and be in a position to throw. Let go of the ball quickly and you will throw out the runner at second two out of every three times you try the play.

Here is another play you can work. Im-

agine first base occupied and nobody out. Your team is behind or the score is tied. If the other team is ahead, the batter is not liable to bunt. The sacrifice hit is not generally resorted to in that case. Give your first baseman a signal that the first ball pitched will be a waste ball. This signal means that the first baseman is to stay close to the bag. When the first baseman answers you that he has received your signal, then signal the pitcher to waste the next ball. As soon as you get the ball, throw it to the first baseman, and chances are that you will catch the runner flat-footed off first base.

But do not try this play too often. The other team will become acquainted with your intentions and fool you. The runner will stay close to first base, and you will find the first ball wasted for nothing. The batter will have one ball and no strikes, and your pitcher will be under a handicap. When you have

tried this play a few times by wasting the first ball, fool the other team and tell the pitcher to put the first ball over the plate. You see the runner will stand near the bag, and the batter, thinking that you intend to waste the ball, will make no effort to strike at it. The pitcher will throw the ball over the plate for a strike, and he will have an advantage over the batter. You have fooled them so that the runner on first will think you have forgotten him and intend to pay all your attention to the batter. When you are convinced that he thinks so, if the runner on first takes a big lead, give your throwing signal to the first baseman, have the pitcher waste the next ball, and you will get the runner at first. Trying a play repeatedly is always dangerous; *mixing your plays is the way to win games.* Always keep that in mind.

The catcher is responsible for the entire

work of the infield. The second baseman and the shortstop get all their signals from the catcher on pitched balls, and they shift around for different batters accordingly. They also get their signals from the catcher on throws, and they play accordingly.

Always give signals plainly so that the second baseman and the shortstop can get them, but hide them sufficiently so that no man on the coaching line can see them.

The Philadelphia Athletics always try to get the signals of another team. By saying that I am not trying to accuse them of being unsportsmanlike; it is all in the game.

In one series with Philadelphia during the season of 1911, I was sure they had my signals. I always noticed that when they got a runner on second base, he would hold his hands behind him when I signaled for a curve ball; whenever I asked for a fast ball he would let his hands drop to his side. In

this way the batter always knew what kind of a ball the pitcher intended to deliver. I changed my signals, and it so happened that the signal I used for a fast ball before meant a curve now and the former curve signal was being used as the signal for a fast ball. The result was that several batsmen came near being hit in the head. The runner on second would inform them that a curve ball was about to be pitched, and instead a fast one came whizzing across the plate; or the man on second would tell the batter that the pitcher intended to deliver a fast ball, and as he stepped close to the plate to meet it, he had to duck to escape being hit by a curve ball.

It is as easy to pick runners off third base as it is to get them off first, and it is done in the same way.

Now there are several plays which a team works when at bat and it is up to the catcher

to break these plays up. One of them, and a dangerous one, is the hit-and-run play; another, just as dangerous, is what we call the "squeeze" play. This last-named play is worked with a man on third and one or nobody out. The runner on third has signaled the batter, and the runner starts with the pitch. He is almost on the plate as the batter meets the ball. The batter does not hit hard. He just rolls it toward third base or toward first base, and before an infielder can get the ball the runner is over the home plate.

I do not think that I shall ever forget one play made against the New York Highlanders in Detroit last summer. To break up the "squeeze" play it is necessary to outguess the batsman. You cannot depend on catching the signal. If you try that you will never break it up, for there are probably 1500 movements that a man will make, any one of which might mean a signal. So you must try

to outguess the batter by interpreting his intentions by the movements he makes.

New York worked the "squeeze" play often. It is a favorite play of the New York team. The score was tied and it was an extra inning in this instance. "Wild Bill" Donovan was pitching. New York had a man on third,—Blair, their catcher, a slow runner. Daniels was the next man at bat. I looked at Daniels out of the corner of my eye and saw Chase walk alongside of him to the plate and whisper to him. I signaled Donovan to waste the first ball. He did. I grabbed the ball and turned around. Blair was about ten feet from the plate. I was able to wait for him and tag him out. The New York team does not know to this day how I happened to outguess them.

If you want to break up this play, never watch the batter for your signal. You must watch the runner on first base for the sign.

If the runner and batter intend to make the play, the runner will be watching the batter. He is looking for the sign. You can tell as soon as he has it, for when he gets it he will turn away and pay no attention to the batter.

You cannot guess hit-and-run signals in a thousand years. There have been many of them, and some unusually funny ones. Steve Brodie used to have one where he would pull out his shirt to tell the base runner that he intended to try the play. The New York Highlanders had a simple but unusually successful one for years. They had the initials "N. Y." in large letters on their shirt fronts. With a man on first base looking for the signal, the batter would rub one hand across the "Y" if he intended to make the play and would rub his hand over the "N" if he decided not to try it. You see the "Y" stood for "YES" and the "N" meant "NO." Two of the best batters and fleetest base runners in



"WILD BILL" DONOVAN PITCHING.
From "Baseball Magazine."

the league had a very simple one. If the batter intended to try the play he would pretend to be chewing gum, and if he did not care to try it his jaws would not move. Many lift the right or left foot. A member of the old Baltimore Orioles would signal by gripping his hat with two or three fingers. Another used to lay his bat across his shoulder; still another would strike his spikes with his bat, knocking the clay off them. Many batters tighten their belts as a signal, and others pull down their caps or set them back on their heads. Some strike the plate with the bat, so you see how a batter could give three or four motions at the plate each of which might be interpreted as a signal, but none of which would mean anything; so follow my advice and *watch the base runner instead of the batter*. His sign is always the same and every base runner has the same sign, so you cannot fail if you look in that direction.

I told you at the start of this article that the way to catch is to let the ball strike the glove and close the hand over it. A good catcher never "fights" the ball. Let the ball come to you and "give" with it—that is, pull both hands back with the ball; that will break the speed. The only time a catcher should go out after a ball is when the base runner is advancing; then get the ball as soon as possible.

On a throw, get the ball away from you as quickly as possible. Try to be as nearly accurate as you can be. By learning to throw accurately you will give the infielders confidence in you, and it will better their work. If the infielders have no confidence in you they will not show to the best of their ability.

There are some batters who have no weak spots; some batters who will hit any kind of ball you pitch to them. Do you know the kind of ball Jackson and Lajoie, two of the

best hitters in baseball, are weak on? It will surprise you to learn that the balls they hit least of all are balls pitched fast over the center of the plate. Lajoie hits more bad pitched balls than good pitched balls. He hits high balls and wide balls, close balls and low balls, much better than any other kind. Good balls are his weakness.

The leading batters of the game are naturally the dread of every pitcher, and every pitcher believes that the way to fool them is to give them bad balls. These batters have been accustomed to receiving so many bad balls and hitting them that when they do get perfect strikes pitched to them they are so surprised they fail to hit them. They never expect that kind.

To illustrate to you, I will recall an instance that occurred in a game between Detroit and Cleveland during the season of 1911. We were playing in Cleveland. Jack-

son, the Cleveland outfielder who had become the talk of the baseball world* by his wonderful hitting, came to bat in the first inning. I signaled for a low curve on the outside of the plate. Jackson hit that into the right field for an extra base.

The next time Jackson came to the plate I asked for a high and fast ball pitched close. Jackson hit that for an extra base. The third time he faced our pitcher I signaled for a low slow ball and Jackson made his third successive hit off that.

When Jackson came to bat the fourth time I remarked to him: "Well, you're just like Lajoie. I have signaled for three different kinds of balls, all of them bad, and you hit every one of them. I guess you have no weakness."

Jackson faced the pitcher and I asked for a fast ball over the center of the plate. Jackson saw it shoot over and heard the umpire

call "Strike One." I signaled for the same thing, and again Jackson saw the ball shoot over the plate and heard "Strike Two." And for the third time I asked for a fast ball over the plate. Jackson poked his bat feebly at the ball and popped up an easy foul.

I don't think there are many more things that I could tell you. If you will master all of these, you will be doing well for a boy.

THE PITCHER

By JOHN WESLEY COOMBS

II

THE PITCHER

“LET me pitch!” This request is generally tossed up from the throats of twelve or more boys just before the start of a game on their favorite lot. It comes right after the teams are selected from the group that is wont to congregate on that particular spot.

Organize a team of boys and the first request is the same. All boys who play ball want to pitch. There is something fascinating about pitching. This part of the game holds in itself a certain irresistible attractiveness. It is the art of defying the law of gravity. It is the art of securing complete control of a ball and the course it takes from

your position in the pitcher's box to the catcher in back of the home plate. There is something fascinating in making a ball take funny twists in the air, and the fascination grows all the stronger when you curve that ball so wide or so peculiarly that it fools the batter.

When I was a boy I wanted to pitch. I guess I wanted to pitch as soon as I learned what baseball was, and I have been pitching ever since. The first game of ball I ever pitched for a team of nine men was played in a cow pasture in Durham, Maine. We had teams around our home just as you find them in other country towns, and I pitched for our Durham team.

When I went to high school the school had a league, and I pitched for Freeport High School in the school league. I was not a winning pitcher. After my high school career I went to Colby College. I pitched for

Colby, winning two Maine State college championships, and when I left there I had "barrels of speed" but little control.

When I entered the major leagues as a member of the Philadelphia team, I was not a finished pitcher,—far from it; I was just starting in. It took me three years to learn how to pitch.

My arm was injured when I started working for Philadelphia. I concluded that a man must need more than speed to become a successful pitcher. It took some time to realize how to acquire the other things needed. While my arm was getting back to shape I thought I never would regain the speed I formerly had, so I kept on working out plans to make myself still valuable.

Studying other pitchers is what enabled me to work out my problem. I studied the late Addie Joss' style. I studied "Wild Bill" Donovan, of the Detroit Tigers; G. Harris

("Doc") White, of the Chicago White Sox; Denton T. ("Old Cy") Young, formerly of the Boston Red Sox, later with the Cleveland Naps and then with the Boston Rustlers; George Mullin, of the Detroit Tigers; "Big Bill" Dineen, of the St. Louis Browns, and several others. I studied them closely, watched their style and got something from each of them. If you study the pitchers of the major leagues, the successful ones, you will discover that each one has some particular thing which he does like no other pitcher. There is something in his work which is original with him and of distinct advantage. I tried to figure out what that one thing was in each of the successful pitchers, and I tried to cultivate it to my own use. After three years of watching, waiting, and practicing, I began to pitch.

Should you desire to become a pitcher I would advise you to show constant effort.

Try hard and keep on trying. If you stay with your task you will undoubtedly succeed. There are other features of pitching,—those that concern the throwing of a ball and the curving of it, and the study of the batsman. These things I will describe to you as I have found them, but first of all let me impress on you that to succeed you must try constantly and keep on trying.

The first thing you must secure is control. One of our great pitchers was once asked to what he attributed his success, and he replied:

“Well, I donate 51 per cent. to control, and the remaining 49 haven’t any vote; so we won’t discuss them.”

CONTROL is necessary to success in pitching. You must have it. The history of the game shows that many pitchers with control and plenty of brains were successful pitchers, although other men with more

speed and curves than they had, were failures. They were successful because they could put the ball where they wanted to put it eleven times out of twelve.

Next to control I would say head work. The use of the brain in pitching comes second in importance in my opinion.

After that, a change of pace. By that I mean changing from a fast ball to a slow ball without giving the batter any way of knowing that change. How you can do this will be told later on in this article.

Fourth, and last in the list of essential features of pitching, I put speed and curves.

Now as to the kinds of ball you should pitch. You have probably read of pitchers having from ten to fourteen different ways to pitch a ball. I would advise young pitchers to use a fast ball and a fast curve and a slow ball and a slow curve. That will be about all you need. The spit ball and all the

other freak deliveries are only different kinds of curves.

When you are learning to pitch do not try to master too much at one time. Go along slowly and patiently. Pick up little by little and be sure that you do everything right before you try to pick up anything else. Many boys who would have made good pitchers have spoiled their chances by trying to pitch too much, or rather to perfect too many kinds of deliveries at the same time. It does not pay in the long run.

Most boys think that a good arm is all that is necessary in pitching. They believe that they must pitch solely with their arm. Do not do this. Learn to pitch with your body. Bring the muscles of your shoulders and the upper part of your body into play. Get them into action when you deliver the ball. If you do this, you will get more speed. Better than that, this system will give you a bigger and

better curve. Also, if you use your body more than your arm it will not tire you out. There are many pitchers losing games because they do not use their body enough. They simply use their arm, and the result is that the arm gets tired because it has to do all the work, and soon the pitcher finds his speed leaving and his curve not breaking right. The other team hits him hard and he loses the game unless he is taken out. Then sometimes he is not taken out soon enough to save the game.

When you are pitching, find out the batter's weakness. You can do this by pitching different kinds of balls to him. Practice will teach you to find out what he likes to hit and what he does not like to strike at by the way he goes after the ball. Always study the batter carefully.

After you discover where the batter's weakness lies, do not pitch him constantly the kind



PITCHING WITH THE WHOLE BODY.
Photograph of Marquard, from "Baseball Magazine."

of balls he is weak on. Change your tactics. Let him think that you will pitch to his weakness, but cross him with the sort of ball that he does not believe you will dare to pitch him.

Much of a pitcher's success lies in outguessing the batter. That is, pitching the kind of balls to him that he is not looking for. If a batter knows that you know his weak point, he may get an idea that every ball you pitch to him will be at his weak spot. He will be prepared for it. And just when he thinks you are about to give him the kind of ball he is weak on, give him something else. Always try to pitch the kind of ball the batter least expects.

Supposing you have two strikes and no balls on the batter. Nine out of ten batters will figure that you will not put the third ball right over the plate. Do not do this always. Pitch the next ball close or to the outside of

the plate, high or low, using your own judgment. But at times with two strikes on the batter put the next one over, for it is always a bad system to use the same plan several times in succession. The more the changes the more valuable is the pitcher.

Most amateur teams play the straight game. That is, when they are at bat and have a man on first base, with none or one out, the batter will be instructed to lay down a bunt for a sacrifice hit. If you are pitching against a team that is in the habit of doing this, when you face a situation where the team you pitch against has a man on first with none or one out, do not put the ball over the plate for the batter. In a case like this pitch the ball high. Batters have trouble in bunting high balls.

Another thing that many teams will do with a man on first base is to play the hit-and-run game. The batter and base runner have

signals arranged between themselves. If they think the second baseman will cover second if the runner attempts to steal, the batter will try to hit the ball down to second. Since the second baseman has gone over to second to take the throw from the catcher, the ball will roll into the outfield, a safe hit. The same applies when the shortstop covers. In this case the batter hits the ball to short instead of second.

Now when you face a team that does this, and that team gets a man on first, pitch the ball wide to the batter if you observe a signal which you think means a hit-and-run play. This is commonly known as a "waste ball." Signal your catcher that you intend to waste the ball, let him step to the outside of the plate and take your pitch. Not alone will this give the catcher a better chance to throw out the man going to second but it will also prevent the batter from hitting the ball.

Many teams have been beaten because the pitcher and catcher guessed when the hit-and-run play was being planned.

With two balls and no strikes on the batter, put the next ball over.

With two balls and one strike on the batter, pitch the next ball inside or outside, but try to get it over the plate.

With three balls and two strikes on the batter, put the next ball over. Curve it at times, if possible. The batter knows the situation and realizes that you will have to put the next one over. He is looking for a fast ball, since fast balls for most pitchers are the easiest to put over the plate. He will be set to hit a fast ball and by curving the ball you will out-guess the batter and often cause him to strike out or be retired on an easy grounder or fly.

Now as to holding runners on bases. Every pitcher has to guard against the base runner. More bases are stolen in the major leagues

each season as the fault of the pitcher than of the catcher. Every pitcher that enters the major leagues is taught to guard against a tell-tale windup. The base runner watches the pitcher. If he finds that the pitcher has a long and slow windup, he will take a big lead and find it easy to steal bases; but if the pitcher has a fast windup and can hide his intentions when he intends to pitch, the base runner has to stay close to the bag or be thrown out.

So when the pitchers develop, they find that they must be able to "make the runner hug the bag." They do this by developing a quick throw to first. Any good base runner can tell by the motion of the average pitcher's shoulder when he intends to make the throw to first, and every pitcher tries to hide this. His success in keeping the runner close to the bag lies in his ability to keep the runner from knowing just when he intends to throw the

ball to the infielder. In this the catcher and shortstop must help the pitcher. Every pitcher should depend on his catcher to signal him when a man is leading far off first. This will enable the pitcher to throw the ball to the first baseman without letting the runner know that the pitcher knows he is taking a big lead. With a runner on second base the shortstop, who is in plain view of the pitcher while the runner is not, can give the pitcher the signal to throw when the runner is leading far off the sack. After the shortstop has given the signal he can run over and cover the bag. As soon as the pitcher has seen the signal given he can by practice tell when to whirl around and throw the ball unknown to the base runner.

As to backing up. The pitcher should back up the infielders on every ball thrown from the outfield to the infield. He should be in a position ten or fifteen feet in back of the in-

fielder where he can stop any ball thrown that may get past the infielder.

The pitcher should back up every base on balls hit to the outfield, where a throw is to be made. The pitcher should cover first on balls hit to the first baseman. Start for first on every ball hit toward right field. If the first baseman should go after it, the pitcher would be in a position to get the runner at first. Do not back up first on balls hit to infield. Too much unnecessary running is bad for a pitcher, but in double plays the catcher should back up the first baseman and the pitcher should go to the plate. If the infielders failed to get the runner at second and some one made an overthrow to first base, the catcher would be in a position to recover the ball and relay it to the pitcher at the plate. This would be much quicker work than letting the first baseman recover the ball himself. This is the only play in which the catcher should leave his position.

The first baseman should always leave his position on balls hit into right field. He will then be able to take the throw from the outfielder. In a case like this the pitcher should cover first. There is always a chance of getting a runner between bases, and in any event the infielders will know they are protected at first.

You have here the essential features of pitching. As to the way of holding the ball for different kinds of deliveries, I would suggest that you hold the ball the same way for every kind of delivery—between the thumb and the first two fingers and against the ring finger of your pitching hand. If you hold them all the same way, you will perhaps deceive the batter. Many batters are able to guess what a pitcher intends to pitch to them by the way he holds the ball. The curve that you give the ball is done with the wrist. You will learn how to curve the ball by constantly

practicing it. It will come to you at once and will no doubt bring a smile when you discover the ease with which you curve a ball. On leaving your hand the ball follows the index finger of your hand. The twist you give it with your wrist produces the curve. No one ever taught me how to pitch any kind of curve; I picked it up by constant practice. Nearly every pitcher, I guess, has done likewise. The best advice I could give you would be to hold every ball in the same way, let the wrist do the work, and practice constantly.

Success in pitching is the same as success in anything else. All successes are achieved alike and with these two factors—PERSISTENCY and CONFIDENCE. Keep on trying constantly and keep your nerve. Realize that you will be able to accomplish a certain thing, set your goal, and keep on trying till you accomplish it.

THE BATTER

By FRANK M. SCHULTE

III

THE BATTER

PICK out the right kind of bat and study the pitcher. Those are the two most important things in batting; the things that will help most.

There are only a few rules or directions that will be of use to everybody, for batting is largely a matter of individuality. Almost everybody who succeeds gets into habits which make a style of his own and, except in cases of glaring faults, it is more likely to hurt a man's batting than to improve it if he makes any decided changes in his style.

What every young player ought to learn at the start can be told in a few words. A good position at bat will help much. See that your feet are planted firmly on the ground to

guard against a possible slip that might wrench you. Stand as near to or far from the plate as comes natural, depending on the length of your bat. Stand so as to look along the path the ball must travel so that you can gauge its direction. Have your arms and shoulders free so that you can move them any way easily.

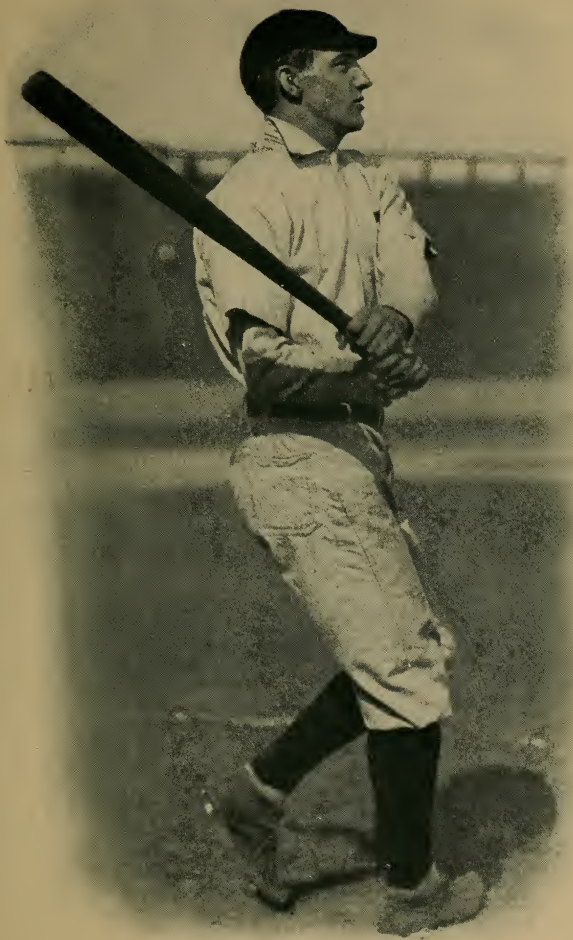
Do not swing on the ball with all your might. A sharp, quick poke will send the ball as far as if you tried to tear the cover off it every time. You must learn to hit the ball squarely instead of with a terrific blow. The trick of a long hit is not in the force of the swing, but in meeting the ball just right. Swing naturally and without any thought of slugging the ball, but with the idea of hitting it with the middle of the end of your bat instead of hitting under it, which will mean only a high fly, or over it which will result in a bounding grounder.

If you are facing a speedy pitcher stand near the catcher, and if a slower pitcher, or one who depends on curves, stand near the diamond. The tendency is to hit a speedy ball toward right field, if you are a right-handed hitter, and to pull a slow ball toward left field. By standing near the catcher you will gain an instant's time in which to get your bat around so as to avoid hitting fast balls to foul ground. In the same way, by standing near the diamond, the tendency to hit slow balls foul by swinging too quickly on them will be avoided somewhat.

Don't move your feet backward or forward from the plate unless you have to, to avoid being hit. Changing your position in the box while the ball is coming at you is like moving a camera when exposed. It blurs the plate. The image of the ball will not be as clear in your eyes if you change your position or the angle of vision while looking at it.

As the ball comes up step the foot nearest the pitcher forward in a direction parallel to the side lines of the batsman's box, and that will keep your eyes right in line with the ball at the same time enabling you to use all the strength necessary to drive the ball hard if you meet it right.

Hold the bat any way you want to; that is, the most natural way, the one that seems easiest to you. You will have to change the way of holding it slightly for different pitchers and at different stages of the game. I do not "choke" a bat, but many others do with good results. By that I mean grasping the bat several inches from the handle, to get a short quick stroke at the ball. I learned to use the full length of the bat and it always is best to stick to the natural way, but I do shorten up my swing when the pitcher has me in the hole, so as to be able to change the direction of my bat as quickly as possible.



USING FULL LENGTH OF BAT.

Photograph of Schulte, by permission of Sprague Publishing Co.

The right kind of a bat to use is the one best suited to you. Every good batsman has his preferences and there are a great many models from which to choose, each of them different from the others. Some of the variations are noticeable to only the experienced man, while others are so great as to be seen by any one. The size, weight, length and shape must be determined by the individual. A big, muscular man probably will do better with a large, heavy bat, while the smaller, wiry person may need less weight for the best results. The object always is to find the bat that seems "handiest." I don't know any better way of expressing it. If it feels clumsy, take a smaller or lighter one; if it feels like a toothpick to you, pick out a heavier one. Whatever the weight or size it should be so well balanced that you can change the direction of your swing instantly, even while in the act of swinging, so as to

enable you to hit a ball that has fooled you. My preference is for a bat with a slender handle, fairly long, and of good size at the end where it is to meet the ball.

Good wood in a bat is of more importance than its size or shape sometimes. There is a great difference in bats in this respect. The one with good wood in it will have the right kind of drive. The ball will leave it fast and will seem to gain speed after leaving it. A salesman once told me that was due to difference in the resiliency of the wood, and, without looking up the word in the dictionary, I am willing to let it go at that. You can tell good wood by the feel of it when the bat meets the ball. If the bat stings your hands when you meet the ball squarely and have firm hold of the handle, it has poor wood in it. Try another.

To show what this resiliency will do, I remember a home run on the Boston grounds.

Purdue was pitching and gave me a knee-high ball. It started out on a line with Purdue's shoulder and kept on rising, finally hitting within a few feet of an advertising sign back of the right-field bleachers. It was not the force of the blow but the good wood in the bat that made the ball travel that far and keep on going up.

Every major league player tries bat after bat, and when he finds the right one he is as jealous of it as of his sweetheart. A player's bat is like the delicate tool of an engraver, or like the pen to which you have become accustomed. Try changing from a fine point to a stub pen or from a steel to a gold tip, and you will know how the batter feels when he has to change bats for any reason.

I had two "home run" bats last year. One of them Tinker and I both used until it wore out. It lost its resiliency, I guess, as even the best bats will. After constant use they

start to split along the lines of the grain and have to be discarded. Then I found a better one, and was going fine. It made three home runs for me in Boston and everybody was saying I was going to beat Buck Freeman's record of twenty-five home runs in a season. They seemed so sure of it that I began to believe it myself. We went home to Chicago, and the Giants were coming for an important series. We were fighting for the pennant then.

Going out to the grounds for the first game I missed my bat and, on inquiry, found it in a disused locker at the clubhouse—broken. It just made me sick and mad all the way through. It had been broken in morning practice, but it was a long time before any of the players dared tell me who did it. I tried a dozen bats in two weeks. None of them felt right. It's funny what a difference it makes. You keep on thinking of that old bat every

time you hit a ball. If you make a long line fly or perhaps a three-bagger, you feel sure that ball would have gone out of the lot if you had only had the old stick in your hands again. Finally, near the end of the season, I found a bat that was a pretty good one. You bet, I took it home with me and kept it there all winter. But it was too late. Seems to me that broken bat cost me a possible record, for I felt sure every time I went to the plate with it that I was going to get hold of a fast one and hit it against the wall or out of sight, and there is a wonderful lot in that feeling of confidence.

For the most part batting in the big leagues is a duel of cunning and wits between the man with the stick and the man on the slab. If a man knows what kind of ball is being pitched, and where it is coming, he can hit it somewhere and usually can hit it safe. The pitcher knows that and knows that the batter

knows it. Consequently each tries to out-guess the other, and the pitcher who out-guesses or crosses you oftenest is the one that puts the biggest crimp in your batting average.

In the matter of studying pitchers no rule is good for all cases. You must use your judgment as to what to do in batting against different men. When facing pitchers like Mordecai Brown or Christy Mathewson, the batter must always be on the alert. With them, or with others who have equally good control, it usually is pretty safe to try to hit the first good one you see coming up. It is not much use to try for a base on balls against that kind of pitcher. Even with three balls and no strikes, or even three and nothing, a pitcher with good control will make you hit the ball, and you are more likely to hit safely if you cross them by hitting unexpectedly. If you wait they are almost certain to have

the count three balls and two strikes and then they have the advantage, although it may not seem so at first thought. With their control they can pitch a fast one, a slow one, or a curve and fool you badly, if you guess wrong.

Some pitchers, when it is three and two, will use the one thing of which they have best control and in which they have most confidence. If by watching you have seen that a man's curve ball is bothering him by not breaking well, then look for a fast one when he has to put the ball over or pass you, and you usually will be right. Sometimes a man has poor control of his fast ball; then look for him to bend a curve over and wait for that. It is the pitchers with good control of all their styles of delivery that keep the batsman always at sea. The pitcher with control usually will keep you in the hole, that is, he will have more strikes than balls called,

or at least as many, unless he has to pitch out to help the catcher stop base-runners. So, as I said before, the best way is to try to hit the first good one in such cases.

When a pitcher has poor control and you get the advantage of him it is better to try for a base on balls, particularly as you usually can guess what he is likely to pitch when it is three and two. When there are men on bases, of course, the batsman is not so free in his choice of when to hit and when not to. He must work with the base-runner, particularly when the runner is on first base. He has more things to think of and cannot choose his time for hitting quite as freely.

If you watch the pitcher closely and constantly, you will often get an idea of what he is pitching from his motions. Watch for the little things all the time and remember that every one of them may mean something that will be of great help. One pitcher I have

in mind uses a broad sweeping wind-up when he delivers a fast ball or a floater, but shortens up his swing noticeably when he pitches a curve ball. Of course, when there are men on first or second bases this pitcher has to cut out most of the wind-up, so knowledge is of no use then.

While on the bench always watch the pitcher when at work. If you notice a peculiar motion, you may not be able to tell from the bench what is being pitched with that particular motion. But while he is pitching to the man ahead of you in the batting order, it is your privilege to wait near the plate for your turn to bat. From there you can tell what is pitched every time and can see if that motion you noticed is a habit in throwing any particular kind of ball or was only an accident. Sometimes the pitcher will not use that motion again at all, but if he does it

regularly for a curve, or a fast, or a slow ball, then you have something on him.

To illustrate, the Cubs used to have a lot of trouble stealing bases on a certain pitcher. He kept us close to our bases and we could get only a short lead. One day somebody noticed that when he was going to throw to first he kept the elbow of his right arm slightly raised from his body, but when he was going to pitch the ball his elbow would be tight against his side before he started winding up. We watched him and found it was a regular habit, and from that day until he quit the league the Cubs stole bases on that pitcher freely. To digress a little from batting, I know it is the general impression that the catcher is responsible for base-running, or lack of it. That is not often true. The best catcher in the world cannot stop runners unless he has the right kind of help in holding the runners close to their

base. On the other hand, a foxy pitcher or heady infielders will make a fair catcher look good because few runners will get the opening to steal on him.

Going back to the bat: learn how to hit at all kinds of balls in the same way. That is to say, learn to get ready to hit at them in the same way, so as not to tip off to the pitcher what you think he is going to pitch. That pitcher is studying you just as closely as you are watching him, and if you hold your bat one way when you expect a fast ball and another way when looking for a curve, be sure he will notice it.

In this duel of wits between pitcher and batsman, teams are always trying to figure out the catcher's signals so as to tip off what kind of ball the batter may expect. This is likely to do more harm than good. It is confusing and frequently dangerous to the batter. Some players want to be tipped off, but as a

rule they are the kind who are looking for friends in the crowd while on the bench, instead of watching their opponents. In the world's series between the Cubs and Athletics we thought we had figured out Ira Thomas' signs. In his "ginger talk" to jolly Bender along, Thomas kept changing from "Chief" to "Albert" and back to "Chief"; and after a while it looked as if "Chief" was Ira's signal for a curve and "Albert" meant a fast ball.

When I came to bat I heard Thomas call out something ending with "Albert," so I set myself to whale a fast ball into the crowd. It looked like it, too, as it came up, but it started curving and I saw that barely in time to save myself a fierce blow on the head by dropping to the ground. That was all the "Albert" I wanted.

In the same series Manager Chance thought the Athletics must have figured out our signs, the way they were hitting the ball,

so he told Kling to change them. Kling did immediately, but the other fellows went right on hitting just the same.

Once we did get a catcher's signs in a legitimate way from the bench and tried to tip off the batsman, but too many tried to do it at one time and the result was confusion. Sheckard, I think it was, had a narrow escape from being hit on the head. At best there can be only a temporary advantage gained by this method, for your opponents are sure to get wise and change their signs so as to cross you with possibly serious results.

It is better to get all your signs about what is to be pitched from the pitcher himself—signs which he does not know he is giving. Then you are sure of them. There is no tunnel route to a .300 batting average nor any soft, easy way to acquire one. But if you have the natural ability and put your heart and mind into the study, you can learn to bat.

THE FIRST BASEMAN

By FRANK L. CHANCE

IV

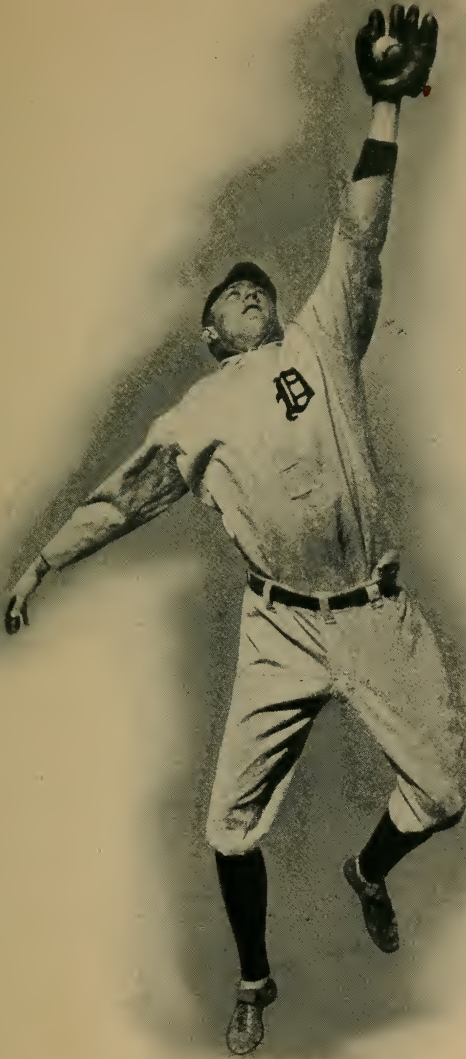
THE FIRST BASEMAN

ALMOST a requisite in the make-up of a successful first baseman is a large stature. Very few first basemen can be found in the major or minor leagues who are not above the average height. The reason for this is plain. A first baseman is a mark for the other infielders and the battery to "shoot at," and the bigger the mark the easier it is to hit. Furthermore, a tall man, of course, has a better chance of stopping high throws and the infielders do not have to wait so long before aiming at him. A short-stop or a third baseman always throws with more confidence when a big fellow is waiting to take the throw, and, as every one

knows, confidence is half the battle in baseball.

The present-day requirements for a first baseman are treble those of a few years ago. In those days, the player stayed close to the bag and not a great deal was expected of him except sureness on balls thrown to him. Now, a first baseman must be fast on his feet and ready to do as much work as any of the other infielders.

Of the great first basemen in the game today, about half are right-handed and the other half are left-handed. It is absolutely necessary for a player in this position to be able to use his gloved hand alone for catching almost as ably as his two hands together, whether he is right- or left-handed. Practice, and plenty of it, alone will enable a player to acquire this one-handed skill. Of course it is unwise to use only the glove when both hands could be employed just as



AFTER A HIGH ONE.

From "The American Boy," by permission of Sprague Publishing Co.

well. But it frequently happens that it is impossible to keep one foot on the bag and still keep your balance for a two-handed catch, and in these cases you will find that your practice with one hand has not been wasted.

One of the hardest things to learn about playing first base is the art of locating the bag without looking for it. For this more hard practice is required. And when one has practiced at it long enough, one finds that he almost invariably can run and touch the bag with his foot with hardly a glance in its direction. When there is a runner on first base and the batter hits a ground ball to the first baseman, giving him a chance to throw out the runner going to second, he must look toward second to make the throw and then dash backwards or sidewise to his own sack, ready at all times to take the return throw which may complete a double play. It will

be seen that he may lose his throw or get to the base too late if he takes the time to look for the bag. He must know where the sack is by instinct.

One of the hardest of the first baseman's duties is the fielding of bunts. When a sacrifice hit is expected from the batsman, and there is a runner on first, he must play in, ready to field the bunt himself if necessary, and still be ready to get back to his own base without delay if the pitcher or catcher can field the bunt, or if the runner strays too far from first and there is a chance to catch him napping. A left-handed thrower, more frequently than one who throws with his right hand, can get in, pick up the bunt and throw it to second base for a force-out; and this is a great play if it can be carried through successfully, for it means an additional man out without allowing the side at bat an advancement on the bases.

A first baseman must learn never to allow his mind to wander an instant from his task. Usually he need watch no one but the catcher—who signals to all the players on the team what kind of ball is to be pitched—and the batter. When there is a man on first base, the first baseman usually is required to stand on the bag, for the purpose of keeping the runner from acquiring too big a lead, or to take quick throws from the catcher or pitcher. If the catcher is giving all the signs, he need watch him only, for he will be told by signals when a throw is going to be made. But he always must be prepared for a throw from the pitcher, as there is little chance to make ready to receive one while the ball is speeding from the pitcher's hands.

Physical strength and the ability to stand many bruises are desirable qualifications in a first baseman. When a man is unaccustomed to playing the position, he is likely to

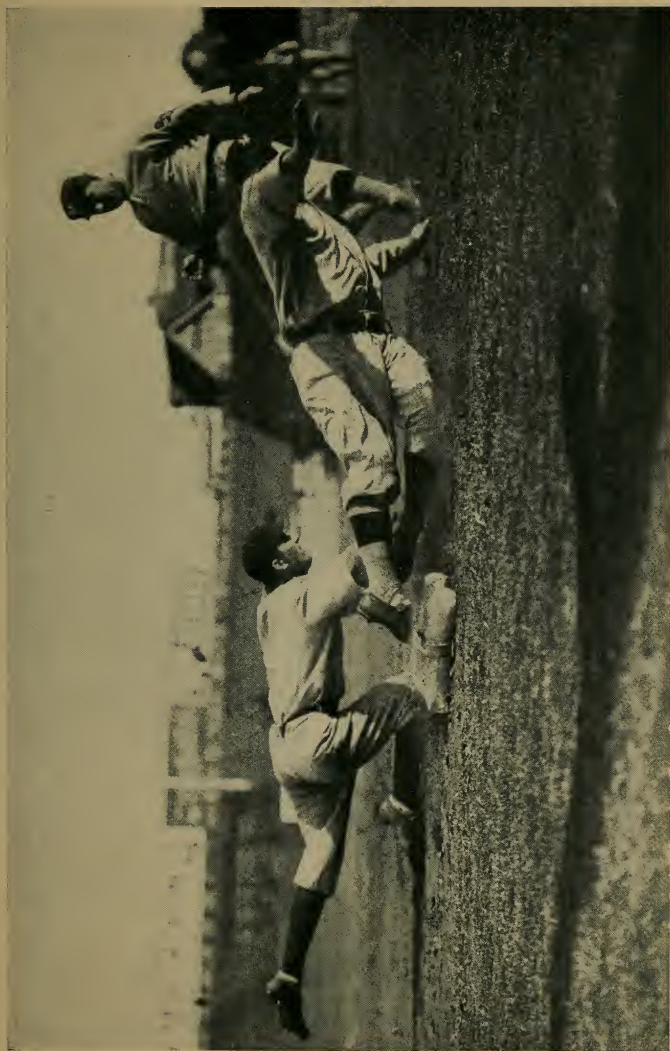
be given many an unnecessary bump. With lots of practice and experience he may learn to avoid most of these. One should never stand on the bag a moment longer than is absolutely necessary. When a throw has been received before the arrival of the runner, the first baseman always should make it a point to get out of the way, to leave the bag and give the runner, who is unable to check his speed quickly, the right of way. Sometimes it is impossible to get away from the sack before the runner crosses it or slides into it. Then the first baseman should occupy as little of the bag as possible, keeping his left foot in contact with a small corner of the sack. Sprained ankles and spiked feet and limbs often result from collisions at first base.

The art of playing first base comes naturally to most of the players who have been experts in the position. However, a few have

learned the "job" by arduous practice and study. To the young man wishing to become an adept on the sack, I would give the following advice:

First, practice taking good throws, both fast and slow ones, until you are sure of yourself. Then have some one throw them high, low, and on both sides of you, learning to keep your foot in touch with the bag while stretching in all directions. Then learn, by hard practice, to field hard-hit ground balls and bunts. The fielding of grounders is one of the most difficult things to master. As for receiving throws that hit the ground before they come to you, the stopping or scooping of them usually is a matter of luck, for a ball seldom bounds twice alike, and the first baseman has no way of telling what it is going to do. Learn to watch your catcher for signals and snap throws, and your pitcher for quick throws to catch runners

napping. Practice throwing to all the other bases, first taking careful aim until you have located them from all angles, and then making your throws quickly, scarcely looking at the target. Always remember to get out of the runner's way when possible, but always insist on having enough place for yourself. Practice swinging around quickly after taking a throw, or while taking one, so that you may get the ball on the runner, running or sliding back into the sack almost as soon as the ball has reached your hands. Remember that it is not necessary to touch the runner with the ball, but with the hand in which the ball is. Never leave your position unguarded to back up a play at another base unless a play at your own is unlikely or impossible. Work with your second baseman and pitcher until you understand them thoroughly. When a ground ball is hit to you, and it is best for the pitcher to cover the bag,



SLIDING INTO FIRST AFTER A BUNT.
From "Baseball Magazine."



use judgment in making the throw to him or to the base. It usually is more preferable to throw directly at the base, and the throw usually should be underhand and not too fast. Finally, work with that glove until you can make it do your bidding, until you are almost as sure with it as with both hands, but never make a one-handed catch unless it is absolutely necessary.

THE SECOND BASEMAN

By EDWARD COLLINS

V

THE SECOND BASEMAN

SECOND base, as compared with the other positions on the team, is mechanically easier. By that I mean that the fielding chances of the second baseman are easier than those of the first or third baseman. The second baseman has to work harder, but grounders do not come as hard at him as they do at the man playing first or the man at third.

But when it comes to the other part of the game, the thinking part, second base becomes a difficult position. The man who plays second can be the keystone of the infield. He must be quick and accurate, but with the development of speed and the right way to use it he must also learn to think quickly.

Baseball games are won in many instances because players think quickly. The most valuable players are those who think faster than the average. If you can think quicker than the other fellow, you have a big advantage. When you start out, learn to think ahead. Always realize the situation and decide on what you will do if a certain play comes up. Plan your actions before the ball is hit. All of the plans will be discussed later in this article.

Second base is called "the pivot of the infield." The majority of plays center around second base. The second baseman controls more plays than any other player on the infield, and a great part of his success depends on harmonious working with the shortstop.

The first thing you want to do is to learn to work with your shortstop. Have a complete understanding with him on all plays.



SECOND BASE, "THE PIVOT OF THE INFIELD."
From "The American Boy," by permission of Sprague Publishing Co.

Decide between yourselves who is to cover second base on certain plays.

Some boy teams seem to think that the second baseman should always cover second. That is wrong. You will find out later why it is wrong. You will also discover why you should agree with the shortstop and why it will be of value to you if you divide the work up properly.

You have all read of team-work. Many baseball writers say that much of the success Connie Mack has achieved with the Athletics is because of our team-work. The meaning of team-work is working in harmony; to produce team-work players must understand each other's style of play perfectly and know what the other man will do on certain occasions. After you reach an understanding with the men with whom you work, you will get the habit of doing the right thing at the right time. You will know what to do be-

cause you know what the other man is doing, or will do, and when this happens on your team you can boast of having team-work.

Much of the success of team-work depends on the second baseman and the short-stop. Play after play centers around them. If they can work together evenly, the other members of the team will be in a better position to act.

Now to the actual work of the second baseman. One of the first things you want to learn is how to "play the batter" as we call it in the major leagues. By that we mean what position you must take on the infield to get the grounders, line drives or short flies from the man at bat.

To "play the batter" properly you must know the batter's batting habits. To get this knowledge you must study him. The average boy at bat will be what we call a "dead left-field hitter" or a "dead right-field hitter."

Some players nearly always hit into right field; others hit into left field nine times out of ten.

Watch the man at bat and find out in what direction he is most likely to hit; then shift yourself accordingly. I will give you an instance to illustrate my point:

Two of the best hitters on the Detroit team are Sam Crawford and Jim Delahanty. Now Crawford has a reputation of being a right-field hitter and Delahanty is inclined to hit the ball into left field. There you have two batsmen who hit in opposite directions.

When Crawford comes to bat I move over near first base, and when Delahanty comes to bat I shift my position near second base. When Crawford is batting, Jack Barry, our shortstop, moves over near second base, and when Delahanty is at bat he goes toward third base. The outfielders switch the same way, but when a batter like Ty Cobb or Larry

Lajoie is up we all play our regular positions. These two players are liable to hit into any direction.

The second baseman should learn to work in harmony with the catcher. He should know all the signals that his catcher gives the pitcher and he should play accordingly. When the boy playing second becomes more experienced he will learn the habits of the batter and he will learn how the batsmen strike at curves, slow balls, and fast balls. He will learn that curves pitched to the average batter will not produce the same kind of results that a fast ball will, and he will find out how the catcher and pitcher intend to fool the batsman and the base-runner.

As a general rule the second baseman should play nearer second base than first base. When I started playing second base for the Athletics, Connie Mack advised me to do this. He explained to me that more

balls are hit near second base than near first base, and since the biggest average of hits go near second it is better to play closer to that bag than to first. In baseball, like everything else, it pays to do things in the ways which are most successful.

There is nothing prettier in infield fielding than a fast double play. These plays demand fast physical work and fast thinking, and here again you will find that playing near second brings the best results.

The hardest play a second baseman has to make is on balls hit over second base. The second baseman has to travel fast to get them and in most instances they are hit hard. When he does get them his work is not completed, for the difficulty comes in making a quick recovery to enable him to throw the ball to second or first base.

It is easier to go to your left than it is to go to your right. Therefore when you are

playing nearer second than first you have a better chance to reach balls hit to second and over the bag. You have less ground to cover and therefore more time to get the ball. And when you go to your left you are always in a better position to make the throw to first.

In these double plays your understanding with the shortstop will give you an advantage. Always agree with him that either he or you will cover the bag. He will know after experience what grounders you field and those he is expected to field, and one of you should always be on the bag to take a throw.

But in trying to make a double play always be sure to get at least one man. Be sure of one. Remember that. Many ambitious young second basemen, in the excitement of the moment and the desire to complete a fast play, fail to touch the bag, or follow this with a bad throw. Failing to get at

least one man, came near losing a game for the Athletics at Cleveland during the season of 1911, when the pennant race was close and exciting.

We were playing the Naps in Cleveland. The last half of the ninth opened with the score 7 to 5 in our favor. Jack Coombs was pitching. Olson, the first batter to face Coombs, made a single. Jackson, the next batter, hit a fast grounder to first. The proper play here would have been to touch first base and let Olson take second. We could have afforded to give Cleveland a run and still come out ahead, but "Stuffy" McInnis, a young player who played his first regular games in the major leagues last season, was our first baseman. His first thought was to get the runner going to second base. He picked up the ball, whirled and lifted his arm to throw. The runner going to second was running on a line between McInnis and

Jack Barry, who had run over to cover second. McInnis realized his position too late. He let go the ball but threw wide in order to avoid hitting Olson in the back with the ball. The result was that both Olson and Jackson were safe on the bags with no one retired. Coombs was taken out of the box and Eddie Plank replaced him. He retired the next three batters in order and we won the game by the score of 7 to 5; but I recall this incident to show you that it is always best to be sure of retiring one runner. That one play might have cost us the game.

See that second base is covered by either yourself or the shortstop on all plays. Keep this constantly in mind. It cannot be repeated often enough. Suppose that a base-runner is on second. He is taking a big lead off the bag. Let the shortstop run over to the bag and take a throw from the catcher to get the player napping. You will say that

few players are caught that way. But that is not the secret of the play. If you and the shortstop continue running over to second you are bound to tire out the base-runner. He has to make a quick start and probably a slide to get back to the bag and his lead will be cut down. If he barely escapes once or twice he will not lead off as far as he did before. Then if a ball is hit to short or second the base-runner will be late in starting for third and there is always the chance to throw him out there. If the ball is hit to the outfield, a safe hit or a fly, the runner will not be in as good a position to start as he would be if you had allowed him to take his lead as he liked. You have worried him and tired him. He is late in starting and many men have been thrown out at the plate on hits on which they would have scored had it not been for the constant running to the bag of the second baseman and shortstop.

Boys are becoming better educated in baseball every year. You will often see smart boys work the hit-and-run play. This play consists of a runner working in harmony with the batter, signaling him when he intends to start or taking a signal from the batter when he intends to hit.

Suppose you have a man on first base. The batter signals him that he will hit the next ball pitched. As soon as the pitcher winds up to deliver the ball, the base-runner starts for second base and it is the intention of the batter to hit the ball through the opening left by the second baseman or the shortstop, whoever is to cover second base to get the runner coming from first to second.

The hit-and-run play is pretty much a bit of guesswork. The batter figures out whether the second baseman or the shortstop will cover second. If he concludes that the second baseman will cover he tries to hit the

ball between first and second, and if he figures that the shortstop will cover second base he tries to hit the ball between second and third base.

Here again your understanding with the shortstop will be of advantage to you. One or the other must cover the bag while the one holds his position. If it is up to you to cover do not wait to see if the batter will hit the ball, but start for the bag to take the catcher's throw in case the batter fails to hit the ball. And again it may not be the hit-and-run play at all, but the man is simply trying to steal second. So when the runner starts for your base, also start and get there, regardless of your curiosity regarding the batter's intentions. If the batter hits the ball through the opening you left, credit him with outguessing you. Should you happen to keep your position to find out whether he hits the ball, he may fail to hit and the base-runner will reach the bag safely.

And again your position will be of advantage to you providing you follow my advice and play nearer second base than first. It will give you more time to get in a position to take the catcher's throw and tag the base-runner, and your presence on the bag will enable the catcher to make a better throw. It will help both the catcher and yourself.

The hit-and-run play to a big extent is a matter of luck. The batter is trying to out-guess you. He is trying to figure out whether you or the shortstop will cover the base.

THE THIRD BASEMAN

By HARRY LORD

VI

THE THIRD BASEMAN

BEFORE I played third base I played every other position on the team, and I just naturally drifted around until I finished there. I am still playing third, and I can truthfully say that I like it better than any of the other positions.

Playing third base is like playing anything else or working at anything else; if you think you are adapted to it, and if you like it, you will stick to it and do the best you can.

During my days at school and college I played other positions. When I took up professional baseball with the Worcester team in the New England League, I decided to hold down third base, or it was decided for me.

In playing third base two things are essential: The first is to know how to field bunts, and the second is to knock down sharp drives and to recover the ball quickly.

You must have a good arm to play third base. Develop your arm if you intend to play that position, for the throws you are compelled to make to first base are much longer than those made by the shortstop and second baseman, and you do not have any more time in which to throw than they do.

The third baseman should be able to tell whether the batter intends to bunt the ball or hit it out. I don't mean that he must be able to tell this on every batter every time, but he should be able to guess the batter's intentions the majority of times. There are some batters whom you can always guess right.

The boy who can size up the batter two out of every three times will make a good third baseman. But you will be hampered

in this in your games as we are in ours. With a man like Ty Cobb or Donie Bush at bat, it is hard to guess his intentions. Both can bunt and both are fast. These two players use one play which is the hardest a third baseman has to contend with. Supposing Bush is on second base with one or none out. Cobb is at bat. Cobb signals Bush. As the pitcher winds up to deliver the ball Bush, who already has secured a big lead, dashes to third. The third baseman, figuring that Cobb intends to bunt, has probably come in close to be in a position to field the ball. Cobb, seeing that Bush has a good start for third, will probably not strike at the ball, figuring that the third baseman is too far in to recover himself and take a throw from the catcher, and that Bush will steal third anyway. His reasoning would be correct.

But suppose that Cobb does intend to meet the ball. The third baseman, suspecting

that Cobb intends to bunt, has crept up close. Instead of bunting Cobb hits the ball hard toward third. The baseman is too far in to make a proper play. If he does succeed in knocking down the ball, it will in all probability roll so far away that he cannot recover it in time to get the lightning-fast Cobb, and if the ball gets away from the third baseman entirely, which is more probable, Bush will score. In either case Cobb would be on first and Bush on third.

Now if the third baseman guessed that Cobb intended to hit the ball hard and played far back, Cobb would bunt the ball and the third baseman could not come in in time to field the ball and get Cobb at first, while Bush would be safe at third. You see they are almost sure to beat you on the play anyway you size it up and anyway you may happen to form your defense.

There is only one way in which you can



"TY" COBB RUNNING BASES.

From "The American Boy," by permission of Sprague Publishing Co.

stop a play like this. If you think that they intend to try it on you, signal your catcher to ask the pitcher to waste the ball, that is, throw it wide of the plate. In that case you will play near the bag. As the pitcher releases the ball you rush over to the bag. The catcher, expecting a steal, is already set to deliver the ball to you, and a fast throw from your catcher will reach you in time to tag out the runner coming from second to third.

The third baseman must be able to get out after balls. In nearly every game balls are lifted near the left-field foul line, to the outside. It is up to the third baseman to get these. He also has a lot of short flies to left to attend to. Many balls are hit too short for the left fielder but within reach of the third baseman if he is able to go out after them. The third baseman's duties in this respect are similar to those of the shortstop. Both are depended on to take foul balls and

“kill” Texas leaguers, the term generally applied to short flies that fall safe.

After all, the most important thing in the line of duty for the third baseman is to judge the batter. The third baseman does not have time to change his stand. If he comes in too soon the batter will outguess him and hit the ball past him for a safe drive, and if he stays back too far the batter is liable to bunt the ball and get a hit that way.

Writing of batters crossing third basemen, I want to recall a play to you that came up in one of the games between Detroit and Boston. I am doing this more forcibly to illustrate to you how far a third baseman can sometimes come from guessing the intentions of a batter or base-runner. Ty Cobb was the principal in this affair. He was on third base. One man was out at the time. The batter hit a sharp grounder to my left. The ball was bound for short. I cut across the

diamond at top speed, dived down with my bare hand, got the ball and threw with almost the same motion. I made a great throw to the plate. The ball struck the catcher's mitt. I recovered my balance and looked to see if the umpire had called Cobb out. But the umpire was not looking at the plate; neither was the catcher. I turned around and looked at third base. There stood Cobb, on third. He had not moved a foot. Why, I do not know and I doubt if he knows. It must have been a supernatural instinct. Nearly any player in the world would have gone home on that grounder. It looked like a sure hit. I got it only by a remarkable play and my throw home was one of the best I have ever made, but it all availed nothing. Cobb had "crossed" me. He may have intended to go home on the throw to first, thinking that the ball would not be thrown to the plate.

In order to develop your arm if you intend to play third base, practice throwing. Long, sharp throws will be demanded from you.

The third baseman's work must all be clean cut. He must be able to pick up a ball and throw from almost any position, overhand, underhand and side arm.

Playing the batter all depends on the batter. For Cobb the third basemen generally play in, depending on his desire to bunt and taking chances on his hard drives. For Lajoie the third basemen generally play deep. Lajoie rarely bunts. He hits them out, and Lajoie can certainly give a ground hit ball and a line drive some speed. Third basemen prefer to be far back when Lajoie drives one in that direction. These are only two instances; you will learn to play a certain way for every batter you meet. Cobb is the hardest man third basemen have to play against, because he constantly tries to outguess them.

A third baseman's work is done in the fraction of a second. Things move fast around third base and the man covering the bag can look like a hero one moment and like a young amateur the next. During the season of 1911 we tried one play against Philadelphia which was a good play as it was planned, but which came out just the opposite way. It was a close game. Philadelphia had a man on second base and nobody out. Young "Stuffy" McInnis was at bat. We held a consultation and decided that the shortstop was to stay near second and keep the runner on the bag, that the first baseman was to come in close and appear anxious to field a bunt. The pitcher was to put the ball directly over the plate and start for third to field the bunt and I was to run over and cover the bag. The setting was perfect inducement for the batter to bunt toward third. I was playing far back and near the bag where I could not

come in on the ball. The shortstop was near second and he could not come over under any circumstance. The first baseman was creeping up to show that we expected the batter to bunt toward first. Under ordinary conditions any batter would lay the ball down along the third base line. But not in this instance; here is what happened:

“Doc” White, our pitcher in this game, delivered the ball, straight for the heart of the plate as we had planned. As he released the ball he started toward the third base line to field the bunt and I went to the bag to take his throw; but instead of bunting the ball to third, McInnis rolled the ball through the pitcher’s box. It was a slow roller. White could not recover himself in time and set about to stop the ball, while the shortstop, who had rushed over, could not possibly get in the way of the ball and it rolled to the outfield. Before the ball was recov-

ered McInnis was on second base and the rest of us stood around like whipped children.

Later we met the world champions in Chicago on our own ball lot. Again the game was close and a similar situation arose. But this time we had a man on second with nobody out. The world champions shifted as we had done and our batter, recognizing the intentions as being the same as those we had against them some weeks before, hit the ball through the box and they were made to look like whipped children. So we evened up matters on that point.

Still, this incident goes further to prove to you how the third baseman, and the other infielders as well, can be crossed by the batter; but in these instances the third baseman suffered most because the play was to be made at his base.

If you look over the fielding averages in the baseball guides, you will discover that

the averages of the third baseman are below those of infielders at short, second base and first base. The third baseman makes more errors in comparison to his chances than the other infielders, and there is a reason for this—his chances are more difficult.

A man who had been playing third base for several years once told me that a third baseman got only two kinds of chances, *hard and harder*. The ball is either hit at him so hard that he can hardly handle it, or he has to come in on bunts that he can barely reach in time to throw out the runner.

The third baseman gets fewer fielding chances than any other man on the infield. In some games he does not get any. Rarely, if ever, are his chances bunched. That makes it hard to play the position and also it brings up a point that you want to remember. This thing is not so difficult in the broiling days of the summer months, but early in the season

and late in the baseball year it gets in its work. If a third baseman goes six or seven innings without having a chance in the field, his arm gets cold. He is not using it. Probably he will not handle a ball from the time the game starts till the seventh or eighth inning and then he is called on to make a fast throw on a close play. His arm, stiffened, will often fail to respond as quickly as he wishes it to.

It is difficult to play third base in the American League in the spring and autumn weeks. That is, it will be unless President Ban B. Johnson abolishes his orders which prohibit the infielders from throwing the ball around the diamond when they take the field in each inning. This practice was abolished because it was figured that too much time was lost in tossing the ball, and since the games stretched over too long a period time had to be economized in some way. By abolishing

the throwing practice the third baseman was deprived of a chance to warm up his arm and consequently many of them missed chances which otherwise they would have handled.

Boys playing third base should plan to get in as much throwing practice as possible. This will keep your arm in shape for the chance that is liable to come at any moment.

The third baseman should arrange signals with his catcher for the purpose of catching men off third base. I have seen many boys' teams lose games simply because the third baseman and catcher did not have a code of signals arranged. The catcher would throw the ball when he saw the runner leading too far off third, and the baseman, not expecting the throw, would see it speed by him to the outfield. It is an easy thing to arrange a signal with the catcher. You can signal him when the runner is leading too far off the

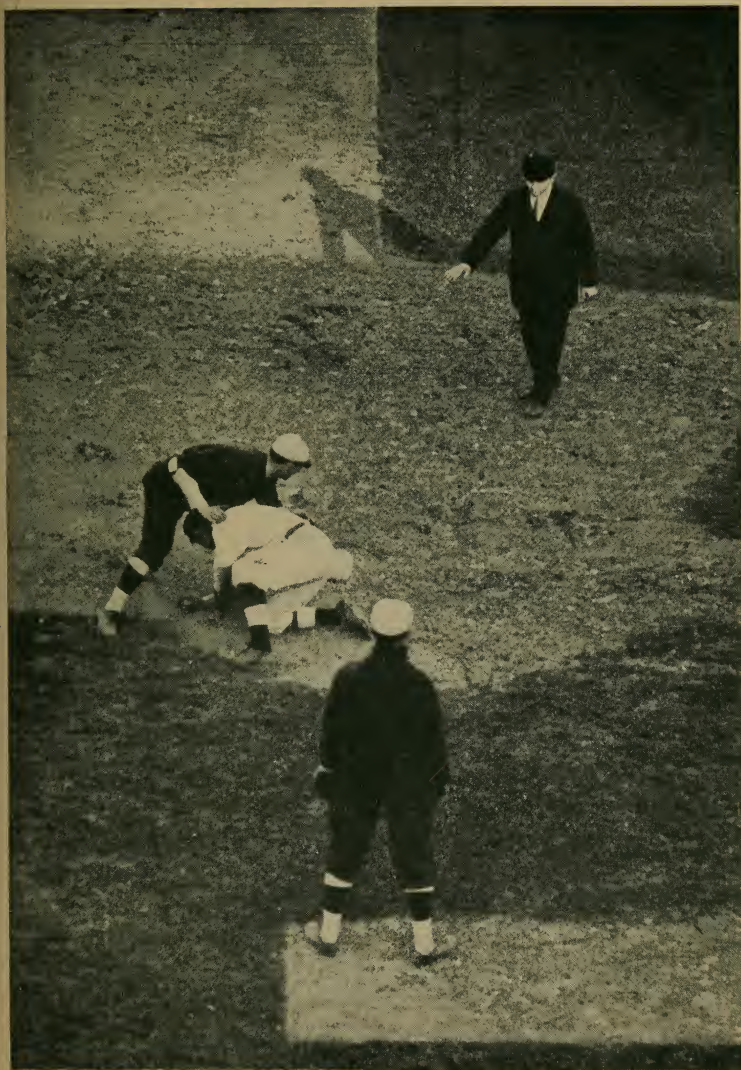
bag when you think you have a chance to get him, and the catcher can signal you when he intends to throw the ball. In that way there will be no misunderstanding and you will always be ready to take a throw. You may miss the runner, but you will hardly miss the throw if it is anywhere near good.

The third baseman should not back up for anybody except on rare occasions. If a ball is hit a long way to the outfield and looks like a three-base drive, or if the runner thinks it is good for three bases and will try to take third on the hit, the third baseman should move back on foul territory and let the shortstop cover third while the third baseman should back up the shortstop. You see, in that case the shortstop will have only half as far to go and can reach third in half the time that it would take him to get into position if the third baseman wanted to cover the bag himself and let the shortstop back

him up. By the time the shortstop got around the third baseman the throw might have gotten away from the third baseman with no chance of the shortstop stopping the ball. The other way is simpler and safer. It takes half the time and is better all round.

In order to be successful the third baseman should be original. He should constantly plan plays that the other fellows do not plan; he should outguess them and think farther ahead than they do.

In the world series of 1910 between the Cubs and Athletics, Eddie Collins was severely criticised for stealing second base, with nobody retired and three balls and no strikes called on the batter. It looked like a foolish play, but it was not. I regard it as one of the best plays in that series. Collins outguessed the other fellows. In a situation like that nobody would expect to see a man steal. Collins knew that. Therefore his



"SAFE ON THIRD!"
From "Baseball Magazine."

THE SHORTSTOP

By OWEN BUSH

VII

THE SHORTSTOP

EVERY trade has its tricks and every position on a ball team has its peculiarities. One of the reasons for the success of baseball is the fact that no two positions are alike. The difference gives variety to the pastime, for you have something different to look into in each case.

All positions on a ball club are related. A team is just like one big family. Some are related more closely than others. For instance, pitcher and catcher are closely related; third and first basemen are closely related. And so we come to shortstop. The nearest relative of that position is second base. Short and second are closely banded and on

the successful working of the two, the skill with which they work together, depends much of the success of the team.

You can never be a success at short unless you can work well with the second baseman, any more than you can be a good second baseman unless you deal closely with the shortstop. These two form the keystone to a team's defense. Upon them depend more important fielding plays than on any two other men. It is up to them to stop the other fellows once they get on base.

The first bit of advice I would give you would be to play deep. Most shortstops play too near the base line. Several years ago I discovered the advantage of playing ten or twelve feet and then even farther in back of the line. This position gives you many advantages that you would not possess otherwise. For one thing it is far easier to come in on a ball than it is to go out after one,

and you can go to your left much easier than to your right. Remember this.

When you play deep you can come in on grounders, and you have a better chance of getting flies to short left and short center fields that would otherwise hit the ground and become Texas leaguers. Also, when you are playing far back you have a better chance to get the line drives. If you have played shortstop and played near the base line, how many times do you recall line drives that whizzed over your head or screamers that you had to move quickly to dodge. Now, if you had played farther back you would have had a chance to see the ball and get your hands up to make a catch, or at least to knock down the drive. If you are quick you can recover such balls five out of ten times soon enough to throw out the man going to first base.

You have probably been taught in school

that the one way to succeed in life is to keep on trying constantly. Baseball is like everything else in that respect; the way to succeed in the game is to practice and keep on practicing. Try hard to do the thing you aim to do in play the best you can.

Should you be thinking of becoming a shortstop, devote your attention and energy to that position. Try constantly to learn all you can about it. Study other fellows and try to find your own weakness and to better yourself in the spots where you are weak.

Hughie Jennings, now manager of our team, is regarded by some men as the greatest shortstop that ever lived. John J. McGraw, manager of the New York Giants, was also one of the greatest infielders the game has produced; and "Wee Willie" Keeler, formerly of the New York Highlanders, was one of the most wonderful natural hitters baseball fans ever looked at. These three men, Keeler,

McGraw, and Jennings, all played together on the old Baltimore Orioles team when they were at their best, and I have heard the old ground-keeper of the Baltimore park remark time and again that Keeler, McGraw and Jennings were always the first men to show up at the park in the morning for practice, and always the last ones to leave when morning practice was at an end. Often it was impossible for the ground-keeper to whitewash the base lines until just before the afternoon game because Keeler, McGraw and Jennings refused to leave the field. And I have heard him say that after the season closed, these great players would visit the park every day and practice for hours and hours.

In this article I can give you some hints that will help you to play shortstop. But the real ability to play the position you will have to pick up yourself.

For instance, I can tell you to play deep. I have shown you the advantages of going after grounders from that position and the added advantage you have in going after fly balls in short left and short center fields and the fouls to the left. You have a chance to cut across the outfield and do the work that a third baseman cannot do because he is playing farther in and finds it almost impossible to turn and get started in time to reach the foul flies. Your position in deep short gives you an easy start.

You must have baseball sense. This can be developed. It is quick judgment and the knowledge of when to do certain things. That will all come to you in time as you practice and keep an eye on your work and the work of others.

One of the first things you want to learn is how to translate the crack of the bat. You can tell where a ball is going by the sound

made when ball and bat meet. I can't describe these sounds to you, but you will learn to recognize them if you pay close attention to them. Some ball players miss many grounders and flies because they start late, and the reason for this in many cases is that they do not understand the message of the crack of the bat. They wait to see the ball on its way before they make up their mind in what direction to move.

If you keep your ears wide open you will soon discover that a ball hit to the second baseman leaves the bat with an entirely different kind of noise from one hit in your direction, and the same holds good on balls hit to the first baseman, the third baseman, the pitcher and outfielders.

Another thing you want to do is to find out how batters hit different pitched balls. And the way to find out what kind of a ball is to be pitched is to watch the signals of the

catcher. A batter will not hit a fast ball over the heart of the plate in the same direction as he hits a low curve that cuts the outside edge of the plate. Knowledge of these things will come to you in time. You will learn to shift your position for a fast ball, slow ball, and curves. You will know in advance that a ball is more likely to come in one particular direction than another, and you will place yourself accordingly.

That is where practice will benefit you. Most boys want to bat all the time. Batting practice is all well and good, but fielding is far more difficult to master. Get one of the boys on your team to bat the ball to you. Get him to hit it in all directions—near you, to each side, over your head, so you will have to travel out after it and past the foul line. Learn to handle every kind of batted ball,—liners, grounders, flies, and fouls.

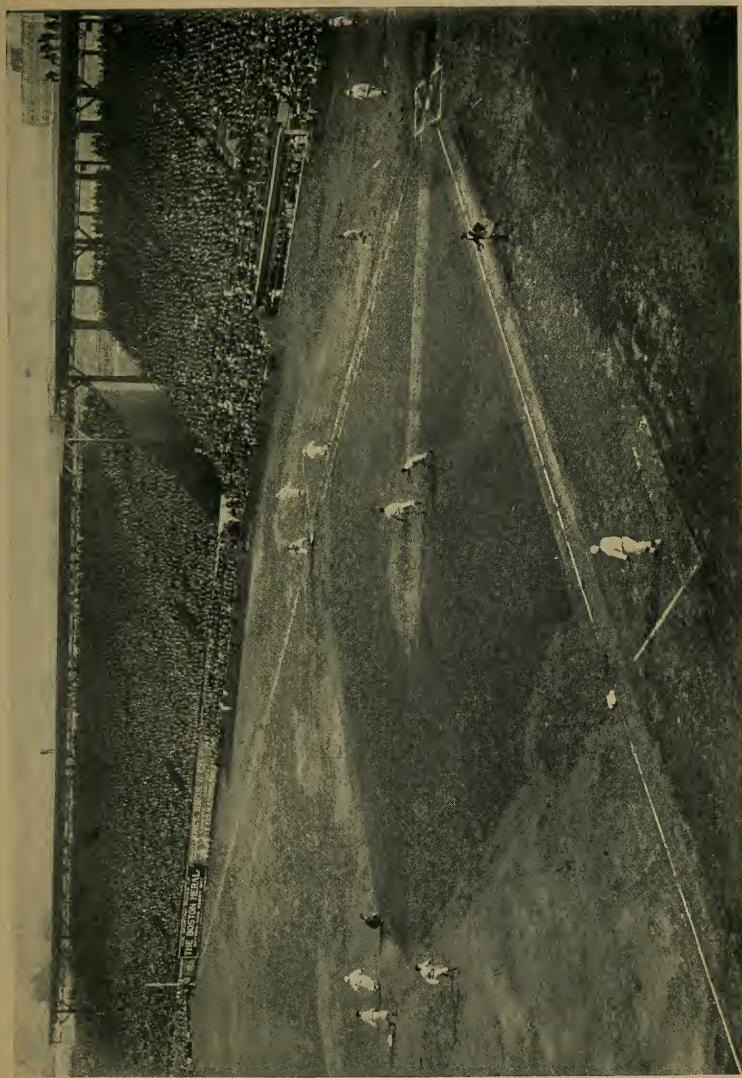
One kind of batted ball that you want to

pay more attention to than any other kind is the slow one. Those slow-rolling grounders are hard to handle. If you can play a slow hit ball you can play any kind that they bat out to you. The average boy will not believe this, but just wait until you try it. I would twice as soon handle a fast grounder as a slow one, and most of the errors I make in a year are on those slow hit balls. Anybody can play a hard hit ball, but only a few players can successfully play a slow hit ball.

The hardest play a shortstop has to make is getting a ball behind the pitcher,—running across behind the box, scooping up the ball and making the throw to first in time to get the base-runner. Most of these balls that get away from the pitcher bound over him or bound away from him. Get started every time a ball is hit to a pitcher. Remember that the distance between the plate and the pitcher's box is not far and that the ball often

comes at the pitcher with terrific speed. Often it comes so fast that he cannot get out of the way and the ball hits him and bounds away. He has broken the speed of the ball and it rolls slowly. That is where your work comes in. Here you have to come in at top speed, get the ball and make a difficult throw. So devote as much of your time as possible to handling these slow hit grounders behind the box.

One thing you must learn, and that is to throw the ball as soon as you get it. Do not hold it the way many players do. Any smart base-runner will find out that you do this and take advantage of it. I have seen batters get infield hits simply because an infielder held the ball before throwing it. The base-runner would slow up as if he had given up all hope of beating out the grounder and as the infielder slowly raised his arm to go through the formality of throwing, the run-



A QUICK THROW TO FIRST BY SHORTSTOP.

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ner would suddenly sprint for first. The infielder could not change his slow motion in time to get the ball to first ahead of the runner. Also, if you throw the ball as soon as you get it, it will give your first baseman a chance to protect himself. Many bad throws are made to first in every game. If you throw as soon as you get the ball, it will give the first baseman a chance to recover the ball if you throw it badly and he happens to muff it.

Learn to throw from any position. Another fault with many infielders is that they have to straighten themselves out and get into a certain posture before they can make a throw. Here the base-runner gets an advantage that will give him extra hits. Every fraction of a second is precious. You often get balls in a low, stooping position. Learn to throw the ball from that position. Again your practice will teach you how to

do this. It will enable you to get base-runners that you wouldn't get if you had to straighten yourself out before making the throw.

Always throw low rather than high. If you throw low there is always a chance for the first baseman to dig the ball out of the dirt or stop it—a thing he will not have a chance to do if you throw high.

Throwing will demand much of your attention. The side arm and underhand motion is the best you can use. Try this and keep on trying till you have learned it. Most boys throw overhand, probably thinking that an overhand throw is much faster than an underhand or side arm throw. But consider the time it takes you to get your arm into position to make an overhand throw. Plays are figured in fractions of seconds in the national pastime. Later on you will learn

to throw fast with the side arm or underhand motion.

Now on the hit-and-run play. Often the opposing team will have a man on first base. They figure that if that man tries to steal second you will run over to second base and take the catcher's throw to get the runner. Since you will run over to cover the bag according to their way of thinking, it will be up to the batter to hit the ball to short while the runner is going to second and you are running for the same bag to tag him out. Since you are out of position the ball that is hit to short, where you ought to be, will go into the outfield for a hit. My advice would be—never leave your position on the hit-and-run play until the ball reaches the catcher's glove. You can get started quickly and reach second base in time to take the catcher's throw and get the base-runner. You will also be in your position to field the ball

if the batter decides to hit it to short. Thus you should get at least one man and possibly make a double play.

Always back up the third baseman on thrown balls, fly balls or foul balls. Do not depend on your left fielder to do this. He is too far out.

Never let the third baseman cut across in front of you and take a grounder that you are going after. You can always prevent this by yelling, "I have it." If the third baseman runs in front of you chances are that he will miss the ball or knock it out of your reach and you miss the man entirely. Have an understanding with your third baseman.

When you watch the catcher for his signals so that you can play the batter, always give the signal to the second baseman. You are generally in a better position to see the signal than the second baseman is, and you can arrange a series of signals with him

which will inform him what you are planning to do.

Always look around and note the position in which the outfielders are playing. Get them stationed in your mind and know just how far each outfielder is from you and also know how far in they can come on short flies and fouls. You will know then how far out it is necessary for you to go. It will also prevent collisions and general mix-ups in fielding.

In regard to the hit-and-run play, you probably know that a second baseman should start for second at the same time the runner starts for that bag when the hit-and-run play is being attempted, and you will probably wonder why I advise you to stay in your position until the ball is in the catcher's hands. Now, the second baseman has the first baseman to help him out. The first baseman can move over and get balls hit into

the second baseman's territory, while the shortstop is not protected in this way. The third baseman is playing in and can't come over on grounders to help the shortstop the way the first baseman can protect the second baseman.

Here I have given you some of the features of playing the position of shortstop. The principal thing is to learn to play deep and to throw from any position. Both of these things, once learned, will be of the greatest value to you. But the way to learn them and learn them right, and the way to learn the other things I have mentioned to perfect your play, is by constant practice. That will teach you more than all the reading you can do on the subject.

THE OUTFIELD

By TRIS SPEAKER

VIII

THE OUTFIELD

PLAYING the outfield and teaching others how to play it are two very different things. When one has been in the game for a number of years, he does the right thing unconsciously on a great many occasions and would have to stop and think if some one asked him why he did it.

I don't believe in the saying that outfielders are born, not made. I've seen many big league outfielders, good ones, too, who have succeeded in making good by virtue of hard work, constant practice, and thinking. I don't believe that a man must be a born ball player to make good in the major leagues, but when he has ball-playing ability, I think he can make out of himself a capable outfielder, in-

fielder or catcher if he goes at the job in the right way and does not allow himself to become discouraged. This isn't true of pitchers. They must have a different kind of natural ability, for there are some major league ball players who couldn't possibly learn to curve a ball so that it would deceive a batter, not even if they tried it for ten years.

If a boy or a young man has the use of all his limbs and a pair of good eyes, he can become a capable outfielder. But he must practice and practice, and then practice some more.

While fleetness of foot is a valuable asset, it is not a necessity in the make-up of a clever outfielder. There are several strong outfielders in the big leagues to-day who are not particularly fast. For example, there are Dan Murphy of the Philadelphia Athletics, Mike Mitchell of the Cincinnati Reds, and Fred Clarke of the Pittsburg Pirates. None of

these men would break any records in a hundred yard dash, but they are all among the top-notchers in their positions.

To the youngster ambitious to become an outfielder, I would say, right at the start: "Learn to judge a fly ball." This is only one of the things to master, but it is just about the most important. Go out to your ball grounds with one of your friends, station yourself in any of the three outfield positions, and have him stand at the home plate and hit "fungoes"—fly balls—to you. Keep this up for weeks, until you can tell about how far a ball is going the instant you see it leave the bat. You will find this a hard task at first, but practice will make it easy. There are some big league outfielders, notably Clarke of Pittsburg and Sheckard of Chicago, who can almost tell from the sound of the bat where a fly is going to fall. Naturally this is a big advantage, as it enables them to get a quick

start in the right direction, and a quick start after a fly ball often turns apparent defeat into victory.

At first it is best to keep your eye on the ball all the time. When you have caught the knack of running back with the ball, or forward to meet it, or to one side or the other to get in its path, and when you can get under possible catches time after time without fail, it is time to try the harder "stunt" of judging them from your first glance and not following them constantly with your eye. It is necessary to learn this, for often balls will be hit so far over your head that you will have to turn your back on them and run at full speed to catch up, and you can't do so while watching them. So you must learn to take your eyes off them, and still have a good idea regarding the place where they are likely to fall.

This knack also comes in handy when men

are on bases and you are running up on a ball. If you have to keep your eyes glued on the ball all the time, you are unable to watch the base-runners, and it frequently happens that a play by an outfielder, quickly thought out while he is in pursuit of a fly and still has his eye on the base-runners, saves his team from defeat.

When you have mastered the art of judging flies, so that you can get under them without watching them constantly, you must devote your attention to the actual catching of them. Always remember that it is a "crime" not to use two hands if possible. Never make a "grand-stand" play by catching a ball with one hand where you could employ both. There are some balls which you can reach with only one hand, but it is not well to practice taking flies with your bare hand or your glove, for it may get you into bad habits.

When you are fairly under a fly, it is al-

ways best to catch it as high up on your body as possible. Not only is this the surest way, but it also gives you more of an opportunity to recover a ball that you may juggle temporarily. Where there is time to choose your own way of catching a ball, place your hands close together with the fingers pointing almost straight up, the palms toward the body, the hands slightly curved, so that they will form a sort of cup with the base of the palms the "bottom" of the "cup," and keep the hands about breast high. This is about the surest way and should be used whenever there is opportunity. But do not get your hands in position any length of time before the ball falls in them. With a little practice, they will come up naturally to the right position just in time. To get them there too soon is dangerous, not only to the fingers themselves, but also to the sureness of the catch.

There are times when you must use your

hands as you do when you are scooping up water to wash your face. This is necessary only when you are running in fast after a ball and must reach for it. Otherwise it is bad practice, for there is much danger of a ball's bounding out of a "cup" that has such low "sides." Balls hit on a line may sometimes be caught with the palms of the hands faced away from the body, but this style belongs chiefly to an infielder, on line hits or on taking hard throws, where the very force of the ball makes it "stick."

In running away from the plate and catching a ball that is hit over your head, it is always best, where possible, to "twist" your gloved hand so that the thumb is in contact with the thumb of your bare hand instead of having the little fingers closest together. Where you have to use the regular "cup" on a ball hit over your head, it is largely a matter of luck. You can learn how to judge this

kind of fly ball, but it is almost impossible to be sure of a catch.

When you are sure you can judge and get under all kinds of "possible" catches, and when you can catch over ninety per cent of the fly balls hit in your "district," it is time to devote your attention to ground balls. Remember that many a game has been lost because of an outfielder's weakness on ground balls. Outfields, as a rule, are not nearly as smooth or well cared for as infields, and there is much more danger of bad and crooked bounds. The one rule which you must live up to strictly is to get your body in front of a ball that is coming to you on the ground. Fumbles in the outfield are not as often disastrous as they are on the infield, so you must not place as much dependence on your hands as infielders do. Stop a ground ball with your hands if possible, but have your body and your feet ready to help if it is necessary.



ONE WAY OF CATCHING LINE HITS.

Photograph of Owen Bush, by permission of Sprague Publishing Co.

I have often prevented a run by getting my foot in front of a drive that was headed for the fence, but I have found it unadvisable to use my foot or my leg where my arms or hands would do the work.

In fielding ground balls, there are times when speed is the essential thing and other times when you must play "safe." If there is a man on second base and the score is tied or the side at bat is only one run behind, it is naturally your aim to keep the man on second from scoring. So if a base hit is made to your field in such a case, it is up to you to field it fast and throw to the plate to head off the run, or to be in a position to catch the man off third if he only bluffs to go home. In such a case you must take chances. Usually every instant is valuable, so you must run up on the ball at full speed, try to pick it up cleanly with your hands alone and be ready to throw to any base. But if the side at bat

needs two or more runs in such a case, safety is better than speed. Let the runner score if he wants to, but make sure of stopping the ball so that the man who hit it cannot secure an extra base.

Constant and tireless practice is needed in fielding ground balls just as it is in judging and catching flies.

Ability to throw fast and with accuracy is a big thing in the make-up of the successful outfielder. There are big league outfielders at the present time who are kept out of the "star" class only because of weak arms, and the weakness is usually their own fault. Men like Lewis and Hooper of the Boston Red Sox, Hofman, Sheckard and Schulte of the Chicago Cubs, Jones of the Detroit Tigers, and Birmingham of the Cleveland team have a big advantage over outfielders with weak "wings." Always bear in mind that speed and accuracy are much more important than

mere distance. Never try to throw to the plate on the fly unless you are standing close up behind the infield. Sheckard of Chicago can actually make a ball bound from third base to the plate, and the bound is just as fast as a line throw. Any one can learn to do nearly as well if he doesn't wear out his arm by using it too often and too strenuously.

It is wise at first to master the trick of throwing to the plate. Throwing to the other bases comes with comparative ease after that. Try to throw so that the ball will come to the catcher on a long first bound. You may find this impossible at the outset, but if your arm is sound, you can do it by hard practice. After you have satisfied yourself that you can throw far enough and with sufficient speed, let up on the practice and try it only once or twice a day, for there is danger of wearing out your arm by using it too much. A big help in accuracy in a throw to the plate are

the white foul lines. A left or a right fielder has an advantage over one who plays in center, for the latter has a harder time regulating his throws by the first and third base lines.

There are lots of outfielders who have great throwing arms, but poor throwing heads—that is, they can throw fast enough, accurately enough and far enough, but they seldom throw to the right place. We will take the example we used once before. A man is on second base and his side needs one run to tie or to win. A ball is hit on the ground to an outfielder and he throws it home to shut off the run. This, of course, is the proper play. But suppose the side at bat needs two runs to tie, there is a man on second and the man at bat hits a ball on the ground to an outfielder. The thoughtless outfielder would throw it home just as in the other case. But the “smart” outfielder would throw it to second base to keep the batsman

from getting there, for "keep the tying run off second base" is a good rule to follow always.

Never make a useless throw; know what you are trying to do before you aim your throw and then throw the ball where your judgment tells you to. Another thing to keep in mind is "get the ball before you throw it." Whether the ball is coming to you on the fly or on the ground, be sure of catching it or picking it up, and then do your throwing. Many games have been lost because an outfielder was so anxious to throw that he fumbled a ground ball or muffed a fly.

There are some outfielders who cannot make a long throw without curving the ball. I am one of these. If I aimed a throw directly at the home plate, it would hit the ground halfway between home and first base. But I aim my plate throws several yards to the right of the plate—the right from my

own point of view—and they curve enough to go almost directly to the catcher. Different outfielders' throws vary in this respect and each man must find out for himself how much his throw curves and act accordingly.

The good outfielder must work with his mates and not independently. He should never go into another outfielder's territory to catch a fly ball unless the other outfielder, bothered by the sun or wind, asks for him. He should always back up his "neighbor" on a ground ball, but should not run over too close on an easy fly ball, for his approach is bound to worry the man who is trying to make the catch.

An outfielder playing for years in one league learns the habits of the batters and "lays" for them. When your team isn't in a league and when it does not meet the same team more than twice in a season, it is, of course, impossible to play for the batters. If

you are a left fielder, however, you are usually safe in playing close in for a left-handed batter and farther out for one who bats right-handed. If your pitcher is a speedy one, you can play closer to the foul line for a left-handed batter than a right. If you are a right-fielder, you move in for a right-handed batter and out for a left-handed one, and so on. A center-fielder moves toward right field for right-handed batters who do not swing quickly, etc. You must watch the batters and the pitchers closely to learn these things.

Most young outfielders play too far out and lose lots of short flies that should be caught, chiefly because they doubt their own ability to run back. Learn to go back for a ball so that it is as easy for you as coming up or standing still, and then you won't be afraid to play as your judgment dictates.

THE BASE-RUNNER

By TYRUS COBB

IX

THE BASE-RUNNER

IF you want to learn to run bases, you must first learn to watch the pitcher's feet and shoulders. That is the first thing the amateur should get in his mind. There are many other things, but we shall get to most of these later on.

Success in base-running depends on many things. To the average boy they sound like little things, and before they are brought to his mind so that he learns their value to him, he has probably not given them a moment's attention.

How many of you boys, when you get on first, watch the pitcher's shoulders and feet? I'll wager that there are not many. You will ask why, and in a few paragraphs you will

know, but before then let us go back even farther. Don't wait until you get on first or second or third before taking notice of the pitcher's shoulders and feet, but observe them before you get on base; study them as soon as you see the pitcher in action.

There are few pitchers who do not give away their intentions of pitching or of throwing to the bag by some particular movement. To keep a runner close to the base a pitcher must hide his intentions. He must try to keep the base-runner in ignorance of whether he intends to pitch the ball to the batter or throw it to the infielder to catch the runner. Now there are not many pitchers in the major leagues who can keep their hands, feet and shoulders in such a position that a good base-runner cannot guess what they intend to do.

There are a few pitchers who have a deceiving movement, a few who can fool the base-runner; and it is hard to steal in games

where these pitchers work, because the base-runner cannot get his proper lead.

If the pitcher uses his right arm in pitching, watch the left foot. You can tell by the position of the left foot whether he intends to throw to the plate or the base. If the pitcher is a left-hander, watch his right foot.

There are some pitchers who bend their knees when they intend to pitch to the batter. They do this in order to get a better spring and give the ball more speed, so when these pitchers bend their knees we know that they intend to pitch to the batter; and if we intend to steal, then is the time to make the dash. Some pitchers have a peculiar movement of the elbow. You can tell their intentions by this movement, and you will discover that by watching the elbow you can always tell when your opportunity arrives.

Other pitchers have other tell-tale movements. There is the veteran "Cy" Young.

When Young settles, the ball on his chest, holding it with both hands, he is ready to pitch to the batter. I do not think that I ever saw Young fail to pitch to the plate when he took this attitude. This is not saying that he never did; I guess he has, but it was always my signal to start when we were playing against Boston or Cleveland and Young was in the box.

Of course, some pitchers rarely pay attention to the base-runner. They do not try to keep him "hugging" the bag, and it is easy to steal on them, because you can take an extra long lead.

It is hard to tell you when to steal. It all depends on the situation. You must take into consideration the boy who is pitching against you and the boy who is catching him. You must know the pitcher's habits and the catcher's ability. But that is not all. You must take your team into consideration. Base

stealing is risky at all times. If the game is close and the occasion demands that you play safe, it would not be a good idea to try to steal; and the same advice holds good in a close pennant race. You may be throwing away your team's chances to win by trying to steal a base.

You probably would not think that it is much easier to steal third base than it is to steal second base. In the first place, you can get a much bigger lead off second base than you can get off first base. The pitcher has to make a turn to throw to second, and you have more time to get back to your base. Also it is more dangerous to throw to second than to first, and pitchers do not attempt to get runners off that base as a general rule. In the second place the catcher has to throw to the left of him when you are going to third, while he had to throw ahead of him when you were stealing second. The catcher has to

turn to make the throw to third. It is much more difficult to throw to third than it is to throw to second. Knowing these facts, you will probably agree to the wisdom of preferring to steal third rather than second.

In your games there is a better chance of scoring on a bad throw to third, because the shortstop and second baseman support one another at second, one backing up the other on a throw from the catcher, while at third the third baseman works alone in most of the games in which boys participate.

I have told you about studying the pitchers, but you must not neglect the catchers. Study them as much as the pitchers. Learn to know just how fast a catcher can throw, and what his weaknesses are. Then learn to take advantage of them.

Try to fool the catcher. Go down any time. By that I mean, try to advance any time. Do your best to cross the catcher.

When you are on first or second and see an opportunity to better your own chances to score by stealing, go down on the first pitched ball, or the second, or the third pitched ball. Change around. Keep the pitcher and the catcher guessing. If you always go down on the first pitched ball, or the second, or third pitched ball, they will soon become acquainted with this fact and be prepared to catch you in your attempt to steal.

A good time to steal is when the pitcher intends to pitch out. Catchers occasionally ask for pitch-outs; that is, throwing the ball wide of the plate, when they think a team intends to use the hit-and-run play, or when the catcher thinks the batter intends to sacrifice. When a pitcher intends to pitch out he will not be watching you as closely as usual. He will have his mind on the batter more than on you.

Another thing you want to learn to do is to

watch the baseman's eyes. The baseman is watching the ball. It is up to him to get the ball and get you. He has to have the ball before he can tag you, and he is therefore watching the course of the ball. By watching the baseman's eyes as you near the bag you will know which way to slide, for you can see which way the ball is coming. The baseman will try to be where the ball will be, and your place is as far away from the baseman as you can get and still be able to reach the bag. Slide out of the baseman's reach, away from the spot where he intends to take the throw.

That brings us to another big point in base-running, namely, sliding. If you should ask me how to learn to slide, I should answer, "practice." That is the way to learn anything. Practice not only makes perfect, but it also makes possible. Keep on trying to slide, and you will learn how; any one should



SLIDING AWAY FROM THE BASEMAN.

From "Baseball Magazine."

be able to learn to "hit the dirt," as we call it in baseball.

Some boys dive into the bag, sliding head first. Do not do this; slide feet first. When you slide feet first you are less liable to be stepped on. Basemen do not keep their feet around a pair of spikes, and these spikes are on the feet which you are shoving toward the bag. When you slide head first, the baseman will not take any precaution, but will step into you, because there is no danger to him. He will not step on you intentionally, but he will not take the same care that he would take if he knew a pair of spikes were whirling that way.

I have told you to follow the course of the ball by watching the baseman's eyes, and to slide away from the spot where he intends to take the throw, but there are exceptions to this rule. Do not try to slide away from every baseman. There are some basemen

who will expect you to slide away from them; they will be looking for it and be prepared to turn and tag you. Again, it is up to you to outguess them, and you can do this by sliding directly into them. There is an advantage in going directly into the baseman who thinks you will slide away from him. You might jar him and he will lose confidence in himself and miss you when he tries to put the ball on you, or you are liable to bump him with your knee or the calf of your leg, so that he will drop the ball.

Never do what a man expects you to do; try to do the opposite. Outguess the players, who are on the defensive when you are running bases. Do the unexpected.

The fall-away slide is used to advantage in running bases. This fall-away consists of throwing your body away from the man holding the ball and expecting to tag you. Throw yourself to either side of him, selecting the

side farthest away from the spot where he will take the throw from the catcher.

Keep moving. That is a good thing to keep in mind constantly and a good thing to practice. Go into a bag hard. Judge the distance. And in this last bit of advice centers much of the success of base-running. It is all in the slide, and to slide properly you must learn to judge distance properly.

Some players slide too soon and they lose speed before they reach the bag. As a matter of fact they are lying still before they touch the bag.

Some players do not slide soon enough, and they slide over the bag, and although they have the base stolen, they are touched out before they can recover it.

It is all a matter of judgment. You must know just how fast you can slide, and must learn to know the precise moment when you want to start your slide. Find out just how

far you should be from the bag when you start your slide.

The average catcher will throw you out if the pitcher who is working with him has a fast movement. Many pitchers have a slow and complex windup, which enables a runner to advance quite a distance before the ball starts for the plate; but if the pitcher delivers the ball fast and does not waste time winding up, and if the catcher is a fair thrower, the chances are against you.

What you want to do is to be on the offensive at all times. When you want to steal, start in a hurry and go fast. Make up your mind that you will get to the bag and do it. Let out all the speed you have and *go into that base*.

You can accomplish much in base-stealing by "bullying" the catcher. There are few catchers who cannot be bullied. If you steal second base, for instance, and the play is

close, or the catcher has made a bad throw, you have a grand opening to continue the good work. The catcher is "up in the air" because you stole a base on him, and it is a good plan to go to third on the next pitched ball. You see, the catcher's mind will be occupied thinking about the base you have just stolen, and the last thing he would think of is that you would try to steal another base immediately after that. As I have told you, third base is easier to steal than second, and since the catcher's mind is also occupied, you have a twofold advantage in going to third.

Another good thing is to tell the catcher that you are going to steal. When you come to bat inform him that if you get on first you will surely steal second on him. Make him believe it, and he will be so busy thinking about it and so anxious to make a good throw that the chances are about four out of five that he will make a poor play. Most likely

he will let go of the ball too soon and make a bad throw, or he will not let go soon enough. You have challenged him, and he is anxious to beat you.

Always make a slide so that you can be up and away again. Do not anchor yourself to the bag—a fault that some base-runners possess. Be ready to start again as soon as you reach the bag. The catcher may have made a bad throw and you can get an extra base on the throw, while if you are anchored to the bag, you will not be able to advance.

When you are trying to score—that is, going into the home plate, go in as hard as you can. You do not have to halt at any bag when you are going home, and you do not have to be ready for an advance on an overthrow; your course will be finished when you reach the plate. You can overslide home as far as you like.

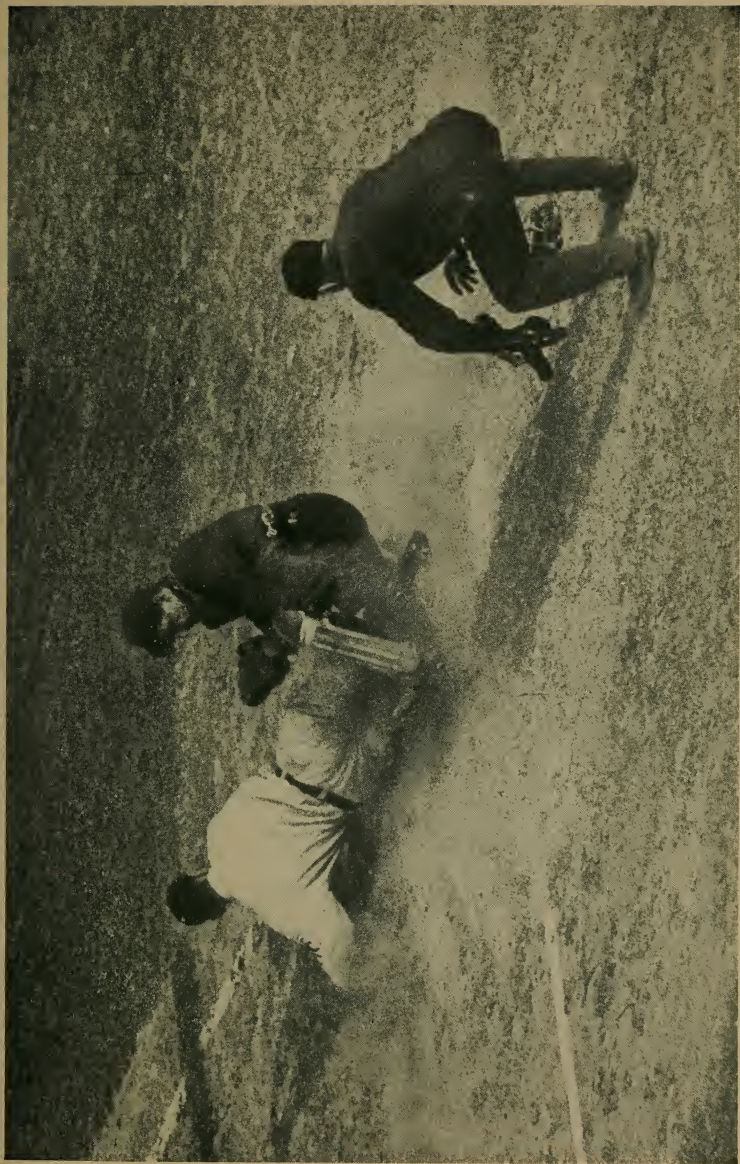
Do not slide only when you think you have

to slide to reach the bag. Make unnecessary slides. This will improve your sliding. Do all the sliding you can when running bases. Not alone will you improve your slide in doing this, but it will also save your strength. It takes away the strain that a sudden stop will produce in you. I have often been accused of sliding when it is totally unnecessary—sliding when I can just as well go into the bag in an upright position; but I do this to save myself and eliminate the strain which will wear on the muscles and slow me up. When you slide you free yourself of all strain and you do not waste your strength; your speed will last longer.

Stopping suddenly has brought injury to many men. Going into a bag upright and bringing themselves to a sudden stop has caused many men to receive a broken ankle or a broken leg. Many have sprained their ankles in just that way. There is no danger

in doing this when you go into a bag sliding. I have trained myself so that I slide without even thinking about it. I have practiced it constantly, so that when I get to the proper distance from a bag I "hit the dirt" just as naturally as I put up my glove to catch a ball, or just as naturally as I move both feet when I run. It is a habit now.

I would advise you not to slide into first base. Some players do this, especially on a close play, the argument in its favor being that the umpire's attention is suddenly thrown on the runner sliding into the bag and that he loses sight of the ball; therefore, he is more liable to give the decision to the runner. It also raises a cloud of dust, which makes it hard to see the play, and the base-runner is to have the advantage on nip and tuck plays. It is dangerous to slide into first base, more dangerous than going into second or third, and you are liable to receive serious



A FAST SLIDE STOPPED BY A PLUCKY CATCHER.

From "The American Boy," by permission of Sprague Publishing Co.

injury, sooner or later, by making a habit of first-base sliding.

Never slide stiff-legged, but have a limber position. As soon as your foot touches the bag stiffen your leg and dig the left knee into the dirt. This will serve as a brake to you and will stop you without your running a chance of injuring yourself. Tighten your muscles as soon as you touch the bag, but not before then.

Before closing I want to say something more, something which I have almost forgotten, and which should have been written at the beginning of this chapter. Of course, you can buy sliding pads at sporting goods houses, but you can protect yourself even more and in a simple manner. When you put on your uniform, double the bottom of your trousers up and under, so that a double thickness will rest over the knee. For as I have told you, the knee plays an important

part in sliding, and should be protected as much as possible. By using the trousers as a means of protection, you will not cause yourself any inconvenience, and you will be protected as well as if you wore knee pads, as some boys do.

THE UMPIRE

By "BILLY" EVANS

X

THE UMPIRE

“**W**HOM shall we get to umpire the game?” That question is asked a million times during the summer months when baseball reigns supreme.

It is usually mighty difficult of solution. Over no other point is so much time wasted as in the selection of the judge of play. There always seems to exist with both sides the feeling that they are going to get the worst of it. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred it is purely a fancied grievance.

When two colleges are scheduled to meet on the diamond, the question of the umpire is all-important. When rival preparatory schools clash at the great national game, the umpire problem always gets the spotlight.

When two teams representing small towns known to be hated rivals are booked to clash, the umpire question is taken up a month in advance of the game. Often it is all but impossible to get the man agreed upon to take a chance. Usually it is almost worth his life to accept. Frequently the question is settled by importing some "semi-pro" minor or big league official.

Why, then, is it so difficult to get umpires? It isn't very hard to pick up a ball player when you need one, although the classy fellows are scarce. It is hard to get an umpire when you want one, even a poor umpire. There seems to be a universal desire to pass up the job, for some reason or other. Just why, it is hard to explain, for in some ways the life of the umpire is far easier than that of the player. The playing of the game is usually looked on as a recreation, while umpiring is regarded as a hard job. In amateur circles the players



SWEEPING UP THE HOME PLATE.

Photograph of "Billy" Evans, by permission of Sprague Publishing Co.

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rarely receive any compensation. The umpire invariably gets his stipend, no matter how small the game. Consequently if you are at all mercenary, it behooves you to take up the umpiring end in preference to playing.

No one cares to be abused for doing the very best he knows how, no matter how poor the effort proves. Perhaps this is the one best reason for the scarcity of umpires, especially good ones, that exists everywhere the game is played. The mistakes of the player are forgotten just as soon as he has made a good play, but the error of the umpire is usually a cherished memory. There are many people who would lose interest in the game if the work of the umpires should become perfect. It would deprive them of the right to figure what might have been the score if the judge of play had not erred in this or that decision.

The position of umpire is not as difficult as

it seems to the average baseball enthusiast. It is largely what the man chooses to make it. If he happens to be unfitted for the job because of temperament, it is far from an enviable position. The sooner such a man gets out of the game the better.

Bill Dinneen, now one of the best umpires in the world, was formerly a star pitcher. With the Boston Americans he won undying fame as a twirler. Baseball history shows any number of wonderful feats to his credit. Dinneen began to go back, and was sold to the St. Louis Americans. He met with varying success as a member of that club. His arm gave him much trouble and he had just about decided that he was through in a baseball way, when he received an offer to become a member of the American League staff of umpires. Dinneen as a player was easy to handle. Seldom did he make a protest, regardless of the nature of the decision. Natu-

rally he had the best wishes of players and umpires. He was a success from the start. As a player he always ranked as a star. In a very few years he has reached a similar position in the ranks of the umpires.

There are any number of youngsters who would be delighted to emulate the career of Bill Dinneen as a pitcher. Many of these have not the slightest chance, as they do not possess the ability. It is quite possible that many of them could achieve a like amount of fame as an umpire, if they cared to forsake the playing of the game to call balls and strikes. If they would listen to Bill Dinneen's views on the two jobs they would select the umpiring end immediately.

"I have played, and umpired, and if I could start all over again I would start right in at umpiring. I much prefer the umpiring end of the game. There is no spring training of a couple months' duration, no morning

practice, and no constant worry over the showing of the club you represent. You are your own boss; you can keep your own hours; you have but one man you must answer to—your president. I much prefer the duties of the umpire to those of the player.” Thus speaks Bill Dinneen. His opinion should carry weight, for he has seen service in both positions.

It would be foolish to attempt to tell how to succeed as an umpire in this article. There are many who contend that umpires are born, not made. While I hardly agree with such a statement, there is much that must come naturally to any one contemplating entering the profession. It is possible, however, to give some advice on the best way to decide plays. That is to be my purpose.

Before going into details in this connection, I want to say a few things about those best adapted to the pursuit. If you are of a nerv-

ous disposition, prone to worry over abuse and criticism, and the possessor of faulty eyesight, don't ever get it into your head that you are cut out to become a second "Silk" O'Loughlin, Tommy Connolly, Billy Klem, or Hank O'Day. You would make the mistake of your life. If you have a bad temper or a desire to hold grievances, cut the umpire stuff. If you let your own temper get away with you and cannot control yourself, how can you expect to control the eighteen players in a game? Under such conditions, you were cut out to shine in some sphere other than baseball.

The first bit of advice I would give those who have a desire to take up the umpiring end of the game is, Be natural. Be original; never imitate. Because Silk O'Loughlin's famous "strike tuh" is a hit with the fans, don't think it will get a laugh when you say it. To imitate the mannerisms of the famous

umpires makes the beginner look ridiculous. Do things naturally; just as you would if you had never heard of nor seen the star umpires in action. It will be easier to work your own way than to copy some one else.

A strong voice is a good asset, but not at all necessary. If one's ranking depended on the power of his voice, I would not be able to get a job in a class X league. There is usually so much enthusiasm at a ball game that the voice of the umpire is drowned out by the cheering of the rival rooters. The system in use in the major leagues, to show the balls and strikes, is a good one. When a strike is declared by the umpire he raises his right hand. When he declares a ball he makes no motion whatever. In consequence no matter how great the noise, it is possible for every fan to follow the rulings of the umpire by use of the semaphore system. In some of the minor leagues the presidents

make their umpires raise their right hand for a strike and the left hand for a ball. The raising of the left hand is unnecessary, I think. It is obvious that the pitch is a ball if the umpire stands motionless, when the right arm is used to designate strikes. It also prevents any confusion in the raising of the arms, and is considerably easier for the umpire.

Be well protected when umpiring back of the plate. To umpire correctly you must be there ALL of the time when working the plate under the double umpire system, and part of the time when working alone. A good mask and chest protector are the two essential requisites. I prefer a mask that has ear protectors, so that if I should happen to turn a bit on a foul tip there would be no danger of injury. Good masks can be secured for \$2 to \$6, and protectors for \$5 to \$10. I always advise getting the best, for they usually

wear three times as long as the inferior article, and are cheaper in the end. An aluminum supporter and shin guards, with a combination knee-pad, are also used by most major and minor league umpires.

Several years ago a number of umpires and catchers in the American League suffered very painful injuries by being struck on the toes by foul tips. In several of the cases the players suffered the loss of the toe-nail, and were kept out of the game for a week or more. Any player who has ever been injured in that manner knows how painful such accidents are. The numerous accidents set a couple of us umpires to thinking that some protection ought to be devised for the toes. We hit upon a device that has proved very effective, and is used by many umpires and catchers.

Take any ordinary pair of baseball shoes to your cobbler and have him make an extra

toe clip about two and one-half or three inches long. It should be made from the stiffest leather obtainable, and be thinned out at the edges to permit sewing to the sole of the shoe. The extra toe clip should be a fraction of an inch from the shoe, and thus make an air cushion. With such an appliance on the shoe the catcher and umpire are impervious to foul tips, so far as the toes are concerned.

When working back of the plate it is best to stand directly behind the catcher. I prefer to work real close to the catcher, and am never more than a foot from him. Umpires differ in this respect, however, such an excellent official as O'Loughlin preferring to stand about a yard behind the backstop. I advise standing directly behind the catcher, because in that position you look straight at the ball as it approaches the plate. If you stand a trifle to the right or left of the catcher you

must necessarily view the ball at a slight angle, and you are more liable to miss the strikes that cut the corners. If you happen to be small of stature, and you are working back of a catcher much larger than yourself, you are compelled to stand a little to either side. That is one reason why some presidents favor men in the neighborhood of six feet tall for the umpiring job. There is another advantage in standing directly behind the catcher, especially if you follow his every move. He protects you from many a foul tip you would stop if standing a trifle to either side.

When working alone always work from behind the plate until a man reaches first. Then shift your position to a location back of the pitcher. This enables you to watch any attempt of the pitcher to catch the runner napping, and makes it easy to get over to the play at second, should one come up there. When

more than one man is on the bases, shift to your former position back of the plate. Should an attempt be made to catch any one napping, just as soon as you see the play started run out on the diamond and get as close as possible to it. The main reasons for working back of the plate when more than one are on the bases are these: You are in the best possible position to see a hit down the foul line. A single will invariably score a man from second or third, and you are in a position to be right over the play. It gives you a full view of the entire field, enabling you to detect an interference on the part of a fielder or base runner.

With the double umpire system in use, which by the way is quite general these days, certain duties devolve on the two officials. There is the plate umpire, and the base umpire. When working the bases I favor standing about ten feet back of first base and about

six feet from the foul line. On throws to the right of the first baseman I usually shift my position as the play is being made to about four feet in front of the bag and about six feet foul. It is an easy matter to run the fourteen feet while the play is being made, and you are then in a position to see if the throw pulls the first baseman off the bag. If the throw is right at the first baseman, or to his left, I retain the original position, about ten feet back of first and six feet foul. When a man reaches first I shift to the center of the diamond, about twenty feet back of the pitcher and eight or ten feet to the left of the box. I vary this position frequently by reason of knowledge of the man at bat. If he is a left-hander and usually hits to right field, I often move to the right of the pitcher's box; always about twenty feet to the rear.

Team work is indulged in by umpires when working double. With a man on first,

the batter often bunts to sacrifice him to second. Many runners try to go to third on the play, if the bunt happens to be a good one. In such cases the play at first is usually close and the base umpire tries to get as close as possible in order to decide correctly. If the runner from first goes to third a play comes up there. It is impossible for the base umpire to get the play at first and then get at all close to the play at third. In such cases the man behind the plate goes to third, and is there to decide the play if it comes up. On the hit-and-run play, with a man on first, the same plan is used. The runner invariably tries to go to third, while the batter usually attempts to get to second on the throw in. The plate umpire anticipates this play and hastens to third, while the base umpire takes a position near second that will best enable him to see the play there, if the batter tries for second on the return of the ball to third.

With only one man on the bases it is the duty of the base umpire to see that the runner holds his base until a fly ball is caught. If more than one man is on the bases, the plate umpire watches the man nearest home. Most of the major league umpires, in order to keep the players from stealing a step or two on a fly ball, keep reminding them that they are being watched and that it would be unwise to leave until the ball is caught. Knowing he is being closely watched, the runner rarely tries to take the advantage. If he does, the results are usually costly. These are a few of the customs used by the leading umpires in an effort to improve umpiring and make the work easier. If the amateur, college, and "semi-pro" umpires would use the same system, many of the causes for forfeited games would be eliminated.

Learn the rules thoroughly, is the first thing I would say to an ambitious youngster

who desires to shine as an umpire. Always read thoroughly the questions asked about various plays and answered in the newspapers. Much valuable knowledge can be obtained in this way. Not only learn the rules, but be able to apply them at a moment's notice.

Never lose sight of the ball, is another cardinal principle of umpiring. Keep it in sight from the time you start the game until the last man is out. It will help you out of many a difficulty that will arise if you turn your head too quickly; such as dropping the ball, interference on the part of the runner or fielder, and use of the hidden ball trick.

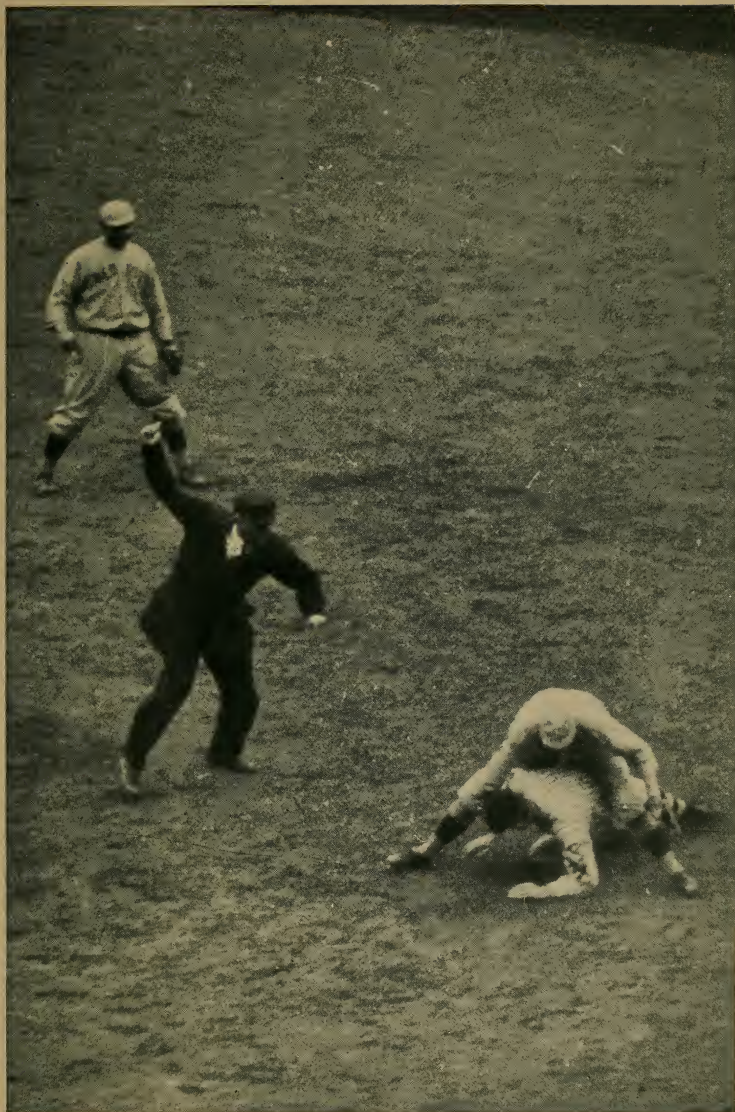
Always try to be on top of every play. Also attempt to come to a stop before the play is completed. It is much easier to take a good picture with a camera when standing still than it is when on the run. The eye in many ways is not unlike the camera.

Do not give your decisions too quickly. That is a fault common with umpires in every class. Anticipating a play often makes a lot of trouble. Some unexpected happening may upset all calculations. Don't be in a hurry. Haste is usually the worst enemy of the umpire.

Don't go on the ball field with a chip on your shoulder. You will find plenty of trouble in the rôle of umpire without looking for it. Enough trouble will present itself. There is no need of beckoning it.

A little mistake by the umpire through carelessness or loss of temper can cause a big row, and big rows hurt baseball. Little mistakes can be avoided, and it's the duty of the umpire to avoid them.

Do not try to look authoritative. Ball players are just human. Men on the ball field are the same as those found in any other walk of life. Impress on them that they are in



CALLING A PLAYER OUT ON SECOND.

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your power, and you issue a challenge. A challenge generally results in trouble.

Be considerate. Ball players in the heat of action often say things they do not mean. Try not to hear them if possible. Often a smile and a word of caution beats a bombastic display of authority.

Treat a fellow like a gentleman and he will treat you the same way, if he is a man. That goes on the ball field as well as in any other business.

Above all things, be firm. A man without a backbone has no right to umpire.

It is more difficult to umpire an amateur game than a big league contest. The big leaguer has backing, while the amateur must protect himself. It is very fortunate that a number of the leading cities are taking up the umpire question. Amateur baseball associations controlling all games on the city parks are in vogue in a number of places. Teams

and players who make trouble for the umpire are fined and suspended, and often lose the right to play on certain grounds. Cleveland and Boston have made wonderful strides in this direction. As a result a better class of fellows are umpiring, for they realize they have the protection of the city behind them.

I think it is only a matter of time when the umpiring problems will be much nearer a solution. There is a big field for the intelligent chap in the umpiring game. It is a battle worth while, for the minors and the majors pay big money. Many of the best umpires draw a \$4000 stipend for six months' work, a rather desirable salary. If you cannot be a star player, take a whirl at the umpiring end. Perhaps you were destined to be a great arbitrator. It is worth while taking the chance.

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