TOUCHING SECOND; INSIDE PLAY OF BIG LEAGUE BASEBALL

BY JOHN J. EVERS, KING OF SECONDBASEMEN, AND HUGH H. FULLERTON, FAMOUS NEWSPAPER WRITER

On the Bench

RUNNERS were on first and third bases. The game was close and one score for either team meant probable victory. At the plate a batter, tense and alert, churned the inoffensive air with short nervous motions of his bat. Out on the whitewashed lines by first and third bases, two coachers ranted and raved, pawed the dirt, ran up and down howling encouragement to the batter and words of caution to the runners. Stretched sprawlingly along the bench a row of white-garbed athletes watched the field before them, holding their poses as if frozen into position. Above and on both sides of them the noise waves of the great crowd broke deafeningly as the rooter's chorus sang the song of hope of another pennant which might be decided in the next minute.

Suddenly, at the end of the tense line of athletes on the bench there was a movement. A player with earnest but rather weary face, immobile even in the moment when the whole result of his year's work might be ruined, raised his right hand to his cap, lifted it an inch from his head, replaced it, and without a muscle of his face twitching sat watching.

Like a flash the coacher at third base sprang down the line. "Look out, Steiny," he screamed. "Look out, Frank," came the echo from the first base coacher's box.

The pitcher wound himself into fantastic contortions. From somewhere out of the tangle of revolving limbs a ball shot like a flash to the plate, into the catcher's mitt. As the pitcher started to wind up, the runner at first base leaped 20 feet towards second, stopped, hesitated and took a step back towards first base. The catcher, who had caught the ball in perfect position, leaped forward, right arm drawn back, watchful, alert, in perfect position to throw to second base. The crowd groaned. Another strike on the batter; the effort to steal balked. Slowly the catcher relaxed from his tense poise. His arm dropped and he started to throw the ball easily back to the pitcher. In that instant the runner at first base was galvanized into action. Two tremendous leaps toward second and he was flying at full speed down the line. The catcher, hesitating a trice, tightened again into throwing position and threw like a rifle shot to second just as he caught a glimpse of a figure tearing homeward from third. An instant later, in a whirling cloud of dust, a runner pivoted around the plate, his foot dragging across the rubber just as the ball, hastily hurled back to the catcher, came down upon his leg. The umpire's hands went down. The run had scored. The game was won. The crowd in a tumult of enthusiasm roared and screamed and shrilled its joy. The man at the end of the bench let the shadow of a smile flit over his face and watched more intently than ever. The crowd had forgotten him and was cheering the others.

Let us see what really happened, for the play described is the one by which Frank Chance saved the championship of 1908 by beating New York one game on the West Side grounds. The crowd saw everything—that is, everything it could see. What it did not see was this: Tinker was batting, Steinfeldt was on first base, Schulte on third. The orders were for a hit-and-run play when Tinker went to bat. After one strike had been called Chance raised his hand, lifted his cap from his head and quickly replaced it—the signal for his men to attempt a delayed double steal. Marshall, coaching at third, cried, "Look out, Steiny," and Evers, coaching at first, "Look out, Frank." No one noticed in the jumble of their yells, that they used the names of the base runners for the first time. The use of the name of the runner was the signal for the delayed double steal. All that happened afterwards was only mechanical, and although Schulte scored and Steinfeldt reached second and Tinker helped them by his motions as he struck at the ball, intentionally missing it, they were but puppets carrying out the orders of the general. Chance had won the game from the bench when he lifted his cap from his head.

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When Chicago and Detroit met for the championship of the world that same Fall, Chance planned and won one of the most beautiful strategic struggles ever fought and the campaign that he planned and carried out was worthy a baseball Napoleon. The game was the second one of the series and was played in Chicago before a huge Sunday crowd. Both teams realized that the game meant almost everything; to Detroit an even chance for the title, to the Cubs almost certainty of retaining their honors. Before the game meetings of both teams were held. Chance planned his campaign depending entirely upon which pitcher Detroit used, and his orders, issued the moment "Wild Bill" Donovan was selected, were conveyed to his men in one word: "Wait." They waited—waited—waited, while the huge crowd went wild as inning after inning reeled away and neither side was able to score a run. Donovan in that game had perhaps as much speed as any human being ever possessed. His fast ball jumped and darted and his curve, pitched with tremendous power and speed, broke almost at right angles.

Inning after inning as Chance sent his men to face that human gatling gun which was firing the National cannon ball at and around them, he monotonously commanded: "Wait," and they went up—and waited. One strike, one ball, two strikes, a foul, two balls, foul, foul, sometimes three strikes, sometimes a weak fly that netted nothing. To the crowd it seemed as if Donovan never could be beaten, as the Champions appeared helpless before his tremendous speed. Still Chance commanded: "Wait—wait him out." Every batter went to the plate intent upon making Donovan pitch as many balls as possible. They fouled, they waited, sometimes even let him strike them out, sometimes they hit, but never until they were compelled to do so. When the eighth inning came neither had scored. Hofman led off that inning and still his orders were to wait, and he waited until he could wait no longer, then rolled a safe scratch hit down towards third. In that moment Chance, commanding general, ordered the charge. Tinker was the next batter, and the order for the assault was the single word: "Switch." That was all, but Tinker, rushing eagerly forward to the batter's position, knew that the leash that had held the champions had been cut and that he could hit when he pleased, even the first ball. Crash! Tinker smote the sphere a terrific blow, and like a swallow the ball darted out to right field, high, higher, until, soaring far over the heads of the crowd, it struck the sign above the right field seats and the crowd went wild. Then, like soldiers attacking a breached wall, the champions rushed to the assault, and, before the inning was over they had made six runs and their waiting game had won.

Chance had calculated from the first that Donovan was pitching with too great speed, and that no human being could hold such a pace through nine innings, and during all the time that the crowd thought Detroit would win, the leader of the champions was sitting watching every move, waiting for the first sign that Donovan was tiring or beginning to lose his speed. At the start of the seventh inning he thought he detected signs of weariness, but the Smiling Tiger still was strong. After Hofman scratched that hit at the start of the eighth, Chance saw Donovan lower his pitching arm as if weary and he issued his order—and after Tinker drove that home run he ordered, "Take a crack at the first one." Like a general, he had found the breach and ordered the charge, and his men leaped to the plate and began the bombardment that brought victory.

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It is seldom that spectators at any game get a glimpse of the brain work behind the movements of the players and even to hardened "fans" the game looks haphazard. They criticise because they do not understand. They see only the individual, what he does, where the ball is hit, or caught, or thrown, and the intent and purpose of it all is lost, without thinking how much thought may have been wasted on the play that the individual attempted to carry out, or how well planned the game may have been. They imagine, most of them, that the players are individuals who walk to the plate, hit or miss the ball, make a safe hit or go out; they do not know that behind the way the man hits, behind the movements of the base runner, behind the position the men take, are hidden a code of signals, and a series of orders to be obeyed without question, for the general good. They scarcely imagine that games are planned before they are started, or that as soon as a pitcher is named the manager and his advisers map out a scheme of action and plan an attack upon the weakest point of the opposing team.

They do not realize that as soon as Marquard of New York or Pfeister of Chicago is named to pitch, the opposing manager orders a bunting game, or that as soon as a catcher known to have a weak arm, or to throw badly, or a pitcher who does not watch base runners carefully is elected to perform battery duty for the day the opposing manager signals "steal," "steal," "steal," to every fast man who reaches a base.

Listen to a coacher, "Doc" Marshall, of Brooklyn, for instance, on the line at first base, running up and down, pawing the dirt, acting like a madman, and perhaps one not deeply versed in the game imagines he is trying to "rattle" the opposing pitcher, or spur his own men to greater efforts. A hundred of the words or phrases he uses may mean nothing, but somewhere among them the base-runner hears, "Careful, Harry," which tells him Marshall has seen a signal for a fast ball, flashed the batter a signal to hit and is warning the runner to start as soon as the ball is pitched. Or he may catch, "Now we're at 'em," and leap forward to save himself from being forced when the batter bunts a sacrifice.

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Sometimes, however, the best laid and most carefully planned campaigns go sadly amiss and one of the instances of this was the miscarriage of a plan Chance once laid to beat St. Louis. Sallee, "The String Bean," a tall rangy pitcher who is about 19 hands high and left-handed, was pitching a strange game. Regardless of who was batting, he pitched the same way to each man, a curve over the plate, another curve either on the inside or outside corner, two fast side arm balls high and outside and then a curve low and over the plate. His pitching, although monotonous, was effective, and for an odd reason.

Chance had a theory that Sallee lacked control, in spite of the fact that he was showing almost perfect control, so he counseled a waiting game and told his men to "take two," which means they were not to strike at either of the first two balls pitched. As a consequence Sallee had the batter "in the hole" all the time—that is, had the advantage, and when they finally were compelled to hit, they were forced to hit his curve, so they did not do much hitting.

By the middle of the game Chance realized Sallee was not going to be wild—and right there the game ceased to be baseball and became a guessing match. Chance, seeing Bresnahan's plan of pitching, expected him to change it, so he stuck to his original plan. Bresnahan knowing Chance expected him to change, decided not to change, and waited for Chance to switch his plan of campaign. The game was almost over before the champions, made desperate, began hitting the first ball, and then Bresnahan changed on every batter, outguessing them all the time.

It was just like men matching heads and tails, each manager sticking to his own plan, Bresnahan turning heads every time and Chance tails, each expecting the other to change.

The man who, perhaps, is past master of directing ball clubs from the bench is John McCloskey, who has managed many clubs. As many of his campaigns have been poorly executed by inferior players, he often has failed, but if ever he gets a team together that can and will carry out his orders, that team probably never will lose a game.

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One of McCloskey's most brilliant plans was conceived when he was managing the St. Louis Cardinals. He had an idea his team could beat Reulbach, of Chicago, by bunting and he sent the first 17 men to bat with orders to bunt or push the ball down the infield, no batter being allowed to hit the ball hard until after two strikes had been called. The first six innings passed without a run being scored by St. Louis. Then two bunts went safe in succession, another advanced the runners and the next man pushed the ball towards first base. It was thrown wild to the plate, two runners scored, and St. Louis continued bunting until five runs counted and the game was won. All during the early stages of the contest the players were frantic, begging to be permitted to hit hard but McCloskey stuck to his plan of campaign and won.

On the attack, when his own team is at bat, the manager has the opportunity to speak to each man as he leaves the bench, to tell him what he is expected to do, but if he changes that plan after the man is in batting position he signals either the batter direct, or the coacher his change of plan, so that every man on the team may know what is to be attempted. With experienced men few signals are necessary, except those of the manager, who must decide which of two possible plays the batter shall try.

After a team has played under one manager several years, the players know, almost without a glance toward the bench, what the orders will be under given circumstances. Often, too, when a manager and batter suspect that the opposing team has learned their signals, the batter will look towards the bench, even when he knows perfectly what is expected of him, and receive a false order intended to "cross" or deceive the trickster who is stealing signals. It is when the batter "crosses" the opposing team, leading them to think he is going to do one thing when he does another, that disastrous consequences are likely to result to the defenders.

In a game between Pittsburg and Philadelphia years ago, when Tommy Leach was a youngster, he thought he detected a signal for Larry Lajoie to bunt and he came creeping forward expecting to get a good start on the bunt if it came towards third. Lajoie slashed a line drive down the third base line, the ball struck Leach on the shins, and his head was the first thing that hit the ground.

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The lengths to which clubs will go to learn the signals, especially the signals of managers from the bench, is astonishing to those not familiar with the game. To catch a signal legitimately, by observation, quickness of eye or quickness of thinking is part of the sport. Marshall of Brooklyn, Kane of Chicago, Dooin of Philadelphia, Bridwell of New York, Hartsell of the Athletics, of the present generation of players, are past masters of the art of seeing what the opposing batsmen are trying to do before the effort is made. In one game at Cincinnati in 1909 Manager Griffin said he was compelled to change his signals six times during the contest because Pat Morgan was getting them.

Efforts have been made in the past to steal the signals by the most brazen trickery and unsportsmanlike methods. Perhaps the worst case of this kind ever revealed was that of the old Philadelphia team in the National League. Here was the greatest aggregation of batters ever assembled on one team, but, not satisfied with their natural batting ability, they wanted to know in advance what kind of a ball the pitcher was going to serve in order to increase their hitting. Morgan Murphy, one of the cleverest men at interpreting signals who ever played in a ball game, formulated the plan. Stationing himself with a confederate in the club house in center field, he armed himself with a pair of powerful field glasses with which he watched the signals of the catchers as well as the signals of the managers from the bench. It was afterwards learned that he frequently watched the pitcher, catcher and manager making up their signals before a game and frequently knew before play started every signal that was to be used.

At first the signals were given by the confederate, who stood in a clubhouse window, and passed the signals by the positions of his arms against the sides of the window. One arm was for fast balls, the other for curves, and the code included many positions of the man. The opponents, knowing their signals were being "tipped off," grew suspicious and Murphy, learning of their suspicions and fearing detection, changed his plan and gave the signals by raising and lowering an awning on the clubhouse. If the awning was raised a few inches and held there, a fast ball was to be pitched and if it was raised and dropped quickly a curve had been signaled for. Not content with the success at home the club took Murphy on the road, and he worked from windows overlooking the park, often hiring rooms in order to carry on the unsportsmanlike practice.

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It is remarkable how quickly a catcher suspects the opposing team is getting his signals, or those that are being given from the bench. He judges chiefly from the unnatural actions of the batters. After even two men have batted the catcher begins to look in all directions to see who is "tipping off" the signs, and he immediately signals the bench what is going on. Then all eyes on the bench scan the field, fences and adjacent buildings to discover what scheme is being worked.

Murphy's awning worked well, until it was discovered by sharp eyes on the bench and then Murphy and his associates invented something entirely new in baseball. They put electric wires underground, connecting the clubhouse with the coacher's box at third base and buried in the ground a small wooden box containing a "buzzer." A certain noisy, obstreperous player was stationed at third base with one foot directly over the box containing the "buzzer" and as the signal sounded he could feel the tapping under his foot, whereupon he called a code word warning the batter what the pitcher was going to pitch or what the opposing manager had ordered from the bench.

Not a regular player on the Philadelphia team batted under 300 per cent while the "buzzer" was in operation, and several of their pitcher and catchers were among the leading batters of the National League. Opposing teams knew that, in some way, the Philadelphians were getting the signals, but how they could not discover until one day the Cincinnati Club was playing on the Philadelphia grounds. Every man on the Cincinnati team was watching to see where the signals were coming from and they saw that one player stationed near third base, no matter how he moved, always kept one foot in the same position.

In the middle of the game, one of the Cincinnati team wandered aimlessly toward third base, made a sudden rush, pushed the guilty Philadelphian out of the coachers' box and dug up the device which was winning games for Philadelphia. The discovery created a big sensation in baseball and aroused a vigorous protest against such unsportsmanlike methods. But instead of stopping, the Philadelphia Club moved the buzzer to their bench, and continued using it until stopped by league action.

Not satisfied with having that much advantage on the home grounds, the man who planned the thing followed his team around the country, renting windows overlooking the grounds in each city and wigwagging signals to the batters. He was caught at Brooklyn by some of the Brooklyn players, and trounced, and after that the method of spying gradually was abandoned.

Pittsburg, however, tried the same thing a year later, using an ingenious device; a semaphore arrangement fastened to the centerfield fence which was raised at right angles for a fast ball and straight up for a curve. The arrangement was not in use for a week before the keen eyes of the opponents discovered it and began changing signals so rapidly the spies could not follow them. After seventeen batters had been hit by pitched balls in four days and some of them hurt because they expected one curve when another was being pitched the scheme was abandoned.

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The defensive game of all teams is ordered by the manager either from the bench or from his field position and the manager who also is a player has an immense advantage over the bench manager in that he can reach his men more readily and moreover without a signal, sign, or spoken word his players can tell from the position he assumes where he wants them to play and how he expects the play to be made.

Observe the New York ball team. McGraw from the bench flashes a signal to Tenney. Devlin creeps forward 15 feet inside of third base, Tenny moves forward almost 25 feet, the entire outfield advances while Doyle and Bridwell remain as they were. There is a man on first base, another on third, one batter out and New York has one run more than the opposing team. Any one who knows the game knows the batter is not a fast man and understands the entire plan of action. If the ball is hit to Tenney, to Devlin or to the pitcher, it will be thrown to the plate to prevent the runner from scoring from third base. If it is hit either to Doyle or to Bridwell, the other will cover second base, take the throw and attempt by a quick throw to complete the double play and retire the opposing team.

The batter makes a base-hit, the runner scores from third, the man who was on first reaches third, and again runners are on first and third bases, with one out, and the opposing team needs a run to win. But the infield instead of playing the same way gets a signal from McGraw and while Tenney and Devlin remain as before, Doyle and Bridwell move forward onto the grass, 25 feet nearer the plate than they were before. The fan may not understand, but a fast man is coming to bat; there is but a slight chance of a double play being executed successfully and the Giants, driven to the defensive, are signaled by their manager to close up the inner line of defense in the desperate hope that the ball will be hit straight at one of them who may cut off the runner at the plate and save the day. McGraw has issued the order, and whether it wins or loses the game he accepts the blame.

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There was a game played in Cincinnati in 1909 which Chicago came near losing after having saved it three times by magnificent generalship. McLean, the heavy hitting Cincinnati catcher, is one of the most dangerous of batters when his team needs runs, and four times during the game he came to bat when a safe hit, it seemed, would win the game for Cincinnati, and each time Chance, on the bench, raised his hand with four fingers up and the thumb turned in, which was his signal to give McLean a base on balls and not allow him to hit and to rely upon retiring the next batter, who was not so dangerous as a batter. Three times Reulbach purposely pitched four balls wide, allowing McLean to take first base and each time the succeeding batter failed to hit, so Cincinnati could not score. The other time Chance shoved up four fingers just as one of the umpires passed between him and the field, and Reulbach missed the signal and thinking Chance had not signalled at all he broke a curve over the plate for a strike. Again Chance flashed four fingers and again the umpire obscured the view, and Reulbach drove over another strike.

Moran, who was catching, was angry. He thought the proper thing to do was to give McLean a base, and he turned to Chance for orders to pass the batter even then, but having escaped twice Chance had a "hunch" that he had been wrong and signalled to make the batter hit. Reulbach pitched a high fast ball and McLean hit it safe to center, scoring a run and tying the score, and the Cubs were compelled to play 11 innings before they finally won the game.

Many spectators who see players go through season after season and play perhaps 175 games a year imagine that they would get hardened and become indifferent as to whether they win or lose. The opposite is the case. The young players endure defeat better than the old ones and it seems the longer the player is in the game the more he hates to lose.

The bench, during a defeat, is like an army in a rout, everyone raving, swearing, blaming each other, and hurling abuse and invective back and forth. But while the result hangs in the balance the men seem impassive, almost indifferent. Conversations are carried on in low tones, orders are issued quickly and incisively, and everything is deliberate and calm. The storm that follows either victory or defeat comes as quickly as the hit or the error that starts it. The moment that the hit that brings victory, or the error that means defeat comes, all the pent-up and repressed excitement of the day breaks loose and then the wildest fan in the bleachers is sane compared with the players—and usually the manager is worst of all.

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But the bench is not always calm or angry, for at times it is like a crowd of school boys, up to all sorts of pranks, from nagging the umpire to playing jokes on each other. One of the funniest situations arose in Cincinnati a few years ago when the Reds were being beaten. One of the players was an inveterate joker, and even in defeat he could not understand the temptation to turn the laugh upon someone. There was a water pipe from the stand that divided directly over the players' bench, one end being at the side of the bench, the other directly over the water tank where the players drank. The joker had discovered that the pipe could be used as a telephone and while his team was going to pieces he sat where he could lean over and speak into the open end of the pipe. Lobert had made a couple of bad misplays and as he went to the water tank to get a drink after the disastrous inning the joker leaned over and spoke into the pipe, saying: "You big, bowlegged, Dutch slob, who ever told you you could play ball?" The words seemed to come directly from over Lobert's head and he leaped back, glaring up into the stand to see who was "roasting" him. The party in the box overhead looked supremely innocent and unconscious, but Lobert remained in front of the bench all during the inning, to see if he could discover the offender.

The joker remained quiet until the next player went to the tank, and then he hurled more insults through the tube. He kept it up during the entire game, abusing, criticising and insulting every player who went to get a drink, and by the middle of the contest he had the players fighting mad, and sending spies into the stand to try to find the man who was abusing them.

So the most interesting part of the game, the brain work, the generalship of baseball is hidden under those coops behind first and third base where the masters of baseball use fingers, eyes, head, feet, hands, cap, strange phrases and senseless words, all of which are in the code, to direct their wonderful puppets. The public never gets a chance to find out what is behind all the running the throwing and batting unless some one tells and then it is impossible to tell even the half.

One knows that when he sees Chance raise his cap, a double steal is to be attempted, that if he raises four fingers, the batter is to be given a base on balls. One knows when McGraw changes places with the man next to him on the bench he is ordering his players to hit and run. One knows that when a Chicago coacher uses the given name of the base runner the given name is part of that code. One knows that when "Doc" Marshall yells, "That's getting them," that "getting" is the catch word, and that when Hughie Jennings pulls grass with his right hand, he means one thing, with his left another, and can hear behind Griffith's "Watch his foot," an order to steal. But no one knows it all.

Deciding Moments of Games

NEARLY every baseball game is won and lost on the play; a play that comes at the psychological instant. Among the players (who do not study psychology) the crucial moment is known as "the break," a phenomenon which no one has analyzed and which the players themselves do not understand.

Twenty men on the bench are watching closely and intently every move of the pitcher. The tide of battle rises, ebbs—and then suddenly, at the start of some inning, something happens. What it is no one outside the psychic sphere of influence ever will understand, but the silent, tight-lipped, alert fellows on the bench see something, or feel something and the mysterious "break" has come.

"One ball!" The players on the bench suddenly stiffen and prepare for action. "Two balls!" Two players jump for bats and begin swinging them; the coachers who have yelled only because it was their duty, suddenly begin raging, screaming and pawing the dirt. The manager, who has appeared half asleep, makes a trumpet of his hands and leads his men, bawling orders to his players and wild taunts to the opponents.

The spectators do not understand anything has happened. Other batters have had two balls called many times—and the situation looks the same to the spectator who is beyond the "break" influence. In two more minutes the bench is a madhouse, with 20 men shouting, screaming, ordering and moving. "Three balls." A madman rushes out to the "deck." "Four balls!" And the spectators join the players in the demonstration, not understanding why. The madness is spreading. Crack! A base hit, a bunt, a wild throw; another base hit; screams! shouts! imprecations!—a roar of frantic applause! a final long fly. The manager reaches for his glove, spits into it, and says quietly: "Four runs. We've got 'em." The break is over and the players' bench is again the quietest part of the grounds. The surge of enthusiasm, confidence and noise subsides and the game is won.

Baseball is almost as much psychological as athletic. Why one team can beat a stronger one regularly, and lose to a weaker with the same regularity; why one batter can hit one pitcher and is helpless before another; why one pitcher is effective against a strong team and at the mercy of another that cannot bat half as hard, are psychological problems.

In 1906 Joe Tinker, who is only an ordinary batter, became imbued with the idea that he could hit Mathewson's pitching at will. The confidence born of this idea enabled him to beat Mathewson out of several games, and after that Mathewson seemed to have the same belief, for Tinker during the season won five games from New York by his individual hitting, and in four of them Mathewson was the victim. One of the hits that Tinker made off Mathewson will be part of Chicago's baseball history for generations. The teams, with Mathewson and Brown pitching, had battled for four innings, neither being able to score and in the fifth Tinker came to bat, first in the inning. Tinker drove the ball on the line into the far left field corner—and he raced around the bases. At third base Zimmerman, who was coaching, leaped out, tackled Tinker and threw him, trying to drag him back to third base, but Tinker broke away and scored with the only run of the game, beating Mathewson 1 to 0. Twice later in the year Tinker beat Mathewson by long drives.

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One of the hardest games Chicago lost in that season was to Brooklyn late in the year, at a time when the Cubs were fighting desperately to overtake New York and Pittsburg, and when every defeat seemed to wreck their last hope. The champions had the game well in hand, but Tim Jordan was hitting terrifically and Lundgren seemed unable to stop him. Twice Jordan had driven the ball over the right field fence of the Washington Park grounds and yet when "the break" came in the eighth inning Chicago was two runs ahead. With one man out, two on bases and Jordan at bat, Chance, seeing Jordan was so anxious to make another long hit that he was kicking one foot high in the air every time a ball was pitched, went to Lundgren and said: "Put it over straight. Make him hit it, if he hits it out of the lot." Four times Lundgren tried to make his straight ball go over the plate and four times it swerved outside and Jordan drew a base on balls. Brooklyn suddenly changed plans, ordered Lumley to bat for Lewis. He drove a three-base hit against the right field fence, and a long fly that followed allowed him to score, and gave Brooklyn the victory.

Another game lost in the critical instant to Cincinnati on the same trip seemed to end Chicago's final chance for the pennant and was the result of just such a rally. The ninth inning saw the Cubs seemingly victorious, the pennant within their grasp, but the psychic wave inspired the Reds and with two men on bases, Lobert at bat and two strikes and two balls called, Chance ordered his pitcher, Overall, to pitch a straight low ball. The result of the entire season seemed to hinge upon that ball. Overall tried, but the fast ball went high instead of low and Lobert sent it screaming over second, driving home two more runs and winning the game.

That hit was one of the best testimonials to the honesty of baseball ever given, for Lobert was wild for Chicago to win the pennant, and a great friend of Overall, whose heart almost was broken by the hit his friend made.

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What probably was the most sensational finish ever recorded in any league was that in the Western League on the last day of the season of 1909. On that day the psychic wave struck Omaha. The situation was this: Des Moines and Sioux City practically were tied for the pennant, and each team was playing two games, the Sioux City team playing at Omaha. Sioux City had to lose two games and Des Moines had to win one to give Des Moines the championship. Sioux City lost the first game, but had the second won by three runs in the ninth inning. Manager "Ducky" Holmes, of the Sioux, did not feel the "break" coming. He leaped into his automobile after the first Omaha batter in the ninth inning went out, called the attention of the crowd to his champions, and raced toward home to start celebrating the victory. Just then the "break" came. Omaha needed three runs to tie, four to win. Hits and errors quickly filled the bases and with two men out three men were on the bases, and a home run drive scored four runs, won for Omaha, beat Sioux City and gave the pennant to Des Moines.

Manager Rourke hastened to the press stand and sent a hurried telegram to the police in a town between Omaha and Holmes' home, which read thus:

"Arrest Holmes, put him in handcuffs and a straight jacket, gag him and then break the news. Omaha won out in the ninth."

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One of the plays which turned the National League tide in 1908 was one made in July and was one of the most peculiar and decisive double plays on record. Chicago was leading by a score of 2 to 1 when New York came in for the seventh inning, and with Brown pitching it looked as if the game was won. Bresnahan, the first batter up, singled, and Donlin smashed a two-base hit to right, sending Bresnahan to third. The "break" was on and the Cubs in panic. Seymour poked a short "Texas League" fly to right field, and Evers played a trick that stopped the break. Pretending not to see the ball, he stood still to the last possible second. Donlin, seeing the ball falling safe and far out of Schulte's reach, made a frantic dash for third, intent upon scoring behind Bresnahan and giving New York the lead instead of only tying the score. Evers, seeing his trick had worked, reached the ball by a desperate sprint, caught it and instead of tossing the ball to Tinker, whirled and without looking threw to the plate, knowing Donlin could be doubled, and intending to prevent Bresnahan from trying to score on the double play, which he might have done. Bresnahan was driven back to third, and Kling racing in, met the throw, hurled the ball back to Tinker on second base completing the double play and stopping the break.

A play which came at the deciding moment and wrecked Chicago's hope of the National League pennant of 1903, was peculiar. The Cubs, then young, were making a spurt, winning games steadily and pressing the leaders, when the play came up that broke the winning streak and robbed Jack Taylor of a record game. It was at Boston and in the ninth inning, with a runner on second base and two men out, the score 1 to 0 in favor of Chicago. Boston had made only one hit off Taylor up to that time. The batsman hit an easy fly to left field and Slagle ran over and caught the ball fairly in his hands, but at the instant it struck his hands he collided with a fence and was rendered unconscious. Before another player could reach the unconscious man and pick up the ball, two runners scored and Boston won the game.

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The majority of games are won and lost by pitchers blundering in the crucial moment, but sometimes it is the catcher who makes the mistake. One of the funniest blunders of years was made by "Hackenschmidt" Gibson, Pittsburg's great catcher, who persisted in his error. "Lefty" Leifield is one of the best and brainiest of pitchers, but essentially a fast ball pitcher and a "waster." A waster is a pitcher who never puts the ball over the plate unless compelled so to do, but keeps it high, low, inside, outside, his plan being to make batters hit bad balls. Leifield seldom uses curves unless compelled to, and his high fast ball which breaks with an odd little jump, is one of the hardest for a batter to hit. One day Leifield had held Chicago helpless and beaten them decisively, and the following day, after the Champions in a "break" moment had started a slashing attack upon Willis, "Young Cy" Young was sent in to check them on the theory that a change from a right to a left-handed pitcher might stop the "break," although every player knows that when a team starts hitting nothing will stop them except sheer accident or a sudden change of "luck." Gibson had observed Leifield's effective use of his fast ball against Chicago and signaled Young to pitch fast ones. The Champions made seven straight hits before Young was retired, and all because Gibson did not differentiate between two kinds of fast ball, Leifield's going high and out, while Young's, pitched shoulder high, angles down and low.

Pitching and studying batters is an art in itself, and the pitcher who knows the men who oppose him, and who can put the ball where he wants it to go is a great pitcher, and one who sometimes can stop "the break." In the art of pitching, the batter, so far as brainwork goes, is a failure, except in instances in which batters are men of desperate courage and fearless. The batter in matching wits with the pitcher has no chance, because he is taking all the risk of injury, and trying to "outguess the pitcher" is dangerous, as the one who blunders may receive a blow on the head that will end his career. The pitcher, on the other hand, can study the batter, analyze his position and condition of nervousness, and, if he has sufficient control of the ball, he can prevent him from hitting.

Observe closely a pitcher when "the break" comes. Up to that time he has been pitching coolly, taking his time, studying each man—but, after "the break" he hurries, returns the ball as fast as he gets it, loses head, loses control, and loses the game. Mathewson, one of the greatest of them all, has only that one fault, and the instant the tide turns against New York every effort of the other players is to slow down Mathewson and make him hold the ball, instead of pitching as soon as it returns to his hands.

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One of the prettiest bits of brain work was done by Leifield, by which he won a hard fought game from Boston and staved off defeat by sheer cleverness. Pittsburg had been leading, but "the break" came against them and Boston started slugging and piling up runs rapidly, until one more hit meant victory, when Bill Dahlen came to bat. Dahlen is a dangerous hitter "inside"—which means when the ball is pitched between him and the plate, and Leifield knew this, so he attempted to make his fast ball go high and outside. Instead the ball escaped him and went waist high across the plate, on the inside corner, just where Dahlen likes to hit. Dahlen, expecting a high fast one, was surprised, and swung at the ball, missing it. Instantly the entire Pittsburg team was screaming at Leifield, abusing him for making the blunder and ordering him not to pitch inside again.

Leifield instantly decided that, as Dahlen had heard him ordered to keep the ball away he would expect a fast ball outside, so instead of pitching there, he deliberately repeated his blunder and Dahlen struck again. Clarke, angry and fearing Leifield had lost control and would lose the game, rushed in and ordered him to keep the ball outside. Leifield nodded assent, but pitched the ball where Dahlen likes it best for the third time, and Dahlen struck out because he had been outguessed and outgeneraled.

Another game which Leifield won late in 1908 after one of the hardest struggles of the year, was won by his brainy pitching to John Kling, Chicago's heavy-hitting catcher, who came to bat in the eighth inning with men on second and third bases and one out. Leifield pitched three balls so far from the plate Kling could not reach them, and Kling naturally supposed that Leifield was going to give him a base on balls, fill the bases and increase the chances for a double play, so he was stretching as far as possible, hoping Leifield would pitch close enough to the plate for him to hit to right field. Instead Leifield shot a fast ball straight over the plate and followed this up by curving two over, striking Kling out, and the result was that Brown lost his first game in three years to Pittsburg.

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There are three decisive moments that stand alone in baseball history. Possibly the greatest of these was the famous tenth inning at Columbus, O., when, with one hit, "Big Dave" Orr decided the American Association race and kept St. Louis from breaking all records as a pennant-winning team. Brooklyn and St. Louis practically were tied for the championship on the last day of the season. If both teams lost, or both won, St. Louis would win its fifth pennant. If St. Louis won and Brooklyn lost, the Browns would have the honors—but if Brooklyn won and St. Louis lost, Brooklyn would win. Brooklyn, playing in the East, already had won, and St. Louis and Columbus were tied in the ninth inning. St. Louis scored one run in the tenth—and with a runner on second base, two men out—and three balls and two strikes called—Orr stood at the plate with one ball left to decide the season. He drove it over the center field fence—sent home a runner ahead of him and won the pennant for Brooklyn, his hit, according to many, being the longest ever made.

The famous spit ball pitched by Jack Chesbro, which slipped and beat New York out of a pennant, the pitch of Theo Breitenstein, the veteran, which gave Nashville victory in the ninth inning of the last game of the season, and with it the pennant, are historic events of recent years.

The greatest individual feat ever performed in a decisive moment—probably in any moment—was a catch by which Bill Lange, now retired, saved a game for Chicago and $200 for himself at Washington years ago. There is a story leading up to that play. Lange had missed a train in Boston two days previous and failed to arrive in New York in time to play there and Anson had fined him $100. Thereupon Lange missed a train to Washington, arrived on the grounds after the teams had practiced and just in time to start the game, and for that Anson fined him another $100.

The game that afternoon went 11 innings, Chicago scoring one run in the 11th. There were two men out, a runner on bases, when Selbach, one of the hardest hitters of his time, smote the ball a fearful blow and sent it flying over Lange's head toward the center field fence. The hit seemed a sure home run, but Lange, a man weighing 225 pounds, turned and, without looking, sprinted desperately out towards the fence, racing with the flying ball. At the last instant, as the ball was going over his head, Lange leaped, stuck up both hands, turned a somersault and crashed against the fence. The boards splintered, one panel crashed outward and out of the wreckage crawled Lange, holding the ball in his hand. Lange came limping in, with the crowd standing on seats, shouting madly, and said to Anson: "Fines go, Cap?" "Nope," said Anson, and the catch had saved the big fielder $200.

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Scores of miraculous individual feats have been made in deciding moments. On one occasion Jimmy Ryan leaped entirely over the bleacher barrier in the right field at Washington and caught a fly ball while falling into the crowd. One of the greatest exhibitions of nerve and courage of that sort was given by Hughie Jennings, now manager of Detroit, in a game at Chicago, when he was playing shortstop for the famous old Baltimore team. The crowd had encircled the playing field and was surging closer and closer to the base lines as the battle progressed and, when the ninth inning came with the score tied, one out and Bill Everett on third base, it looked as if Chicago had won and that Baltimore, by losing, would be compelled to surrender the pennant. The batter hit a foul ball, high and into the crowd back of third base, a crowd ten deep, part seated, part kneeling, with rows of standing spectators behind. Jennings, tearing across from short, did not hesitate. Hurling himself through the air, he caught the ball over the heads of the spectators and plunged down upon them. Everett meantime had touched third base, turned and was sprinting for home. Jennings, climbing upon the heads and bodies of prostrate spectators, threw to the plate, cut off Everett and in the next inning Baltimore won the game.

That Baltimore crowd, a team of only fair players winning by dash, nerve and courage, gave many exhibitions of individual daring, but one of the greatest was the feat of "Wee Willie" Keeler on the home grounds. Right field on the Baltimore grounds of those days was the terror of visiting players. It was down hill, rough and weedy, and back of it was a high hill, peculiarly constructed for advertising purposes. Inside the fence sloped at an angle of about 65 degrees, being straight on the outer side. Boston was playing there late in the season in which the two teams had their frantic struggle for the pennant, and late in the game, with runners on bases, Stahl drove a long fly to right that seemed likely to win the game for Boston. Keeler, one of the fleetest men in the business, seeing the ball was going over his head, leaped upon the slope of the fence and started to run along it, going higher and higher, and just as the ball was going over the fence he caught it. His momentum carried him higher along the incline and before the big crowd realized he had caught the ball, he was running along the top of the fence, and then, holding the ball aloft, he plunged over and fell outside the grounds. Probably never a ballplayer received such an outburst of applause as he did when he climbed over the fence and tossed the ball to the infield.

Another magnificent individual feat was that of "Dutch" Schaefer, then Detroit's second baseman, in the opening game of the world's championship series between Detroit and Chicago in 1907, a game which, for thrills and excitement, was the greatest ever played. An immense crowd watched the battle and both teams were near exhaustion in the 12th inning from the succession of tense situations and desperate plays. The crowd seethed and bubbled with excitement and spouted volcanoes of noise at every move of the players. The score was tied. Chicago had a man on first base and two out when Chance hit one of the fiercest drives of the year, a line smash between first and second which, if it cleared the infield, was certain to go to the corner of the grounds and bring home the run for which the clubs had fought for over two hours. Schaefer, playing down near second base, raced back ten steps, leaped, twisted, stuck up his gloved hand, with his back to the stand, and while twisting dragged down the ball, and the crowd was so stunned by the wonderful catch that it forgot to applaud until the umpire had stopped play and called the game a draw.

That same game, however, was thrown away by Chicago in the critical instant by Steinfeldt, who, in the stress of excitement, lost his head and the game at the moment of victory. That was in the tenth inning when a wild throw let Slagle sprint for the plate, as Steinfeldt was batting. The ball was recovered and thrown back to the plate, too late. It came high and five feet to the left of the plate as Slagle raced across, and, in that instant, when the crowd thought the game over, Steinfeldt hunched his shoulder, made the ball hit him, preventing the fielder from getting it. Slagle promptly was called out because of Steinfeldt's interference and the struggle continued until Schaefer saved it by his wonderful catch.

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Sometimes the turning play of a game, the one that decides it is freakish, and one of the oddest freaks of recent years happened in one of the bitter contests between the Chicago and New York teams, an accident that gave New York a victory, and almost gave them the championship. Chicago had runners on first and third bases, one man out and "Del" Howard at the bat, when the fates interfered. Howard hit a vicious bounding drive near second base, and Doyle was in front of the ball, with Bridwell standing on second base to receive the throw and relay the ball to first base to complete the double play. The ball broke through Doyle's hands and struck his shinbone with terrific force. Instead of the error making Chicago's victory easy, it beat the Cubs, for the ball, bouncing off Doyle's shin, went straight into Bridwell's hands and resulted in an easy double play that deprived the champions of the victory.

In that same series there was one of the grandest exhibitions of generalship and pitching ever recorded. Crandall was pitching for New York, and the Giants gained a big lead early in the game. When the ninth inning started with New York four runs ahead, Mathewson, who had been warmed up and ready to rescue Crandall, thought the game safe and, retiring to the clubhouse, disrobed, got under the shower bath, and prepared to don his street clothes. Just then "the

(Concluded on Page 6.)