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# STRIKE-OUT SAWYER

and **CLANCY'S BASE STEALER**

By **George William Daley**




"I've got a ball nine o' thieves," says Sim Meeker, manager of the Swattburgs, to Chopemout Clancy and Sure-Eye Simmons and me, who were representing Sluggitt Corners at a meeting of the Big Stick League.

"They're a nine o' robbers, filchers, and swipers. They can steal any base on any catcher in the league at any time. They can stretch a sure put-out into a single, a single into a double, a double into a triple, and a triple into a homer. Gittin' in from third with the ball in the pitcher's hands is their specialty. Slide! The swaller lighty wigin' don't git along faster than them fellers do on the fronts o' their uniforms."

Sure-Eye Simmons was scared.

"Yes," says Sim.



Kept Right on Through His Shirt.

"We're goin' to play tag with that elephant ketcher o' yours, and them rhinoceros fielders, and that big-footed third baseman, and the long-armed guy on first that's always afraid o' steppin' on his hands. They'll need two men to count the runs when we come to Sluggitt Corners."

"The race is not always to the swift," says Chopemout Clancy. "Our ketcher may be ponderous, likewise our fielders; but what nature has failed to give us our wits may supply."

And Chopemout wouldn't talk another word, just sayin' every time Sim said anything more about his fast base-runners: "The race is not always to the swift."

And that's how it came that we found him on our ball grounds the day before the opening game of the series with the Swattburgs, with a couple o' men with shovels, and the whole base path between first and second torn up about four feet wide.

He just waved off the storm of questions we fired at him and says: "The race is not always to the swift." Then he got confidential.

"I know these Swattburgs," says he. "A year or two ago I tried to stop 'em stealin' by sprinklin' powdered rosin on the ground round second. The first man that started to slide slid fine till he struck the stuff, and then he stopped—or, rather, his uniform stopped. He kept right on through the neck of his shirt and the women in the grand stand squealed. The next man came feet first, and when they cut his clothes away f'm the ground one of his stockin's was hangin' round his neck."

"It was a great idea, but a easy grounder stuck in the rosin, and then stuck in the baseman's glove so he couldn't throw, an' finally the ball stuck to the bat, and they tumbled. That's why I have started work here on the Clancy Consolidated Base Stealer and Catcher's Companion, so as to be ready for the Swattburgs when they line up."

"The what?" says we all.

"The Clancy Consolidated Base Stealer and Catcher's Companion," says Chopemout, speakin' slow and distinct.

"But we don't want 'em to steal any more bases," says Sure-Eye. "They're too good at that already, and if we help 'em any it'll be a goose-egg for ours."

"This ain't for them," says Chopemout. "We have a monopoly on the base-stealin' abilities o' this here machine, and they get the lemon."

"In other words, it's just like this. I've got here with me a piece o' fine movin' sidewalk. It runs by 'lectricity, and is controlled by two levers at our bench. One of our men gets to first, say, and we want him to get to second. He leads off. I pull lever number one, and he's down to second like a shot, makin' a bluff slide at the end to deceive the Swattburgs."

"Then when they, with all their, with all their swift-foot-

edness and fine slidin' ability come up, what do I do? Why, I pull lever number two as they start to steal, and the machine starts movin' back to rds first. Their runner is diggin' up the sand, head down an' feet a' flyin'; but he ain't goin' no hundred yards in ten seconds, is he? Not much! He's got to overcome the runnin' back of the Clancy Consolidated, et cetera.

The ground's flyin' underneath his feet, but I'm waitin' for him with the ball when he starts his slide for the bag."

After explainin' that his machine would be so fixed that you couldn't tell it from the rest of the diamond, and that it was noiseless and absolutely impossible to discover, Sure-Eye finally decided to let Chopemout give it a trial.

I was pitchin' that first game with them, and deliberately gave their first man up a base on balls. Well, it all came off as Chopemout had said. The runner took a long lead, and as I pitched he started. I never saw a man try to run as fast as he did, but Dwarf Duffy lined the ball down, and Simmons, who was playin' short in Clancy's place, tagged him standing up.

"Why, you animated ice-wagon!" yells Sim Meeker, runnin' out on the diamond. "Wot d'ye think you are—a steam roller? Do you call that runnin'? You let this big glass-armed stiff ketch you! The bench for yours, an' turn back five dollars of your salary!"

The next man did the same thing, and the audience begun to make remarks about these Swattburgs not bein' so fast, after all.

Then we go to bat, the faithful Chopemout still at the lever. Molasses Mack was our first hitter. He weighed a ton in condition, and two tons when he was fat. We called him Molasses because the flies stuck to him—fly balls, I mean.



Tagged Him Standing Up.

Well, Molasses gets hit in the ribs and goes to first. The Swattburgs' pitcher looks at the mountain of fat tryin' to dance off first, and throws to plate.

"Zip!" Molasses goes flyin' to second. He took steps twenty feet long.

He was goin' so fast that when he came to slide we thought he'd break, but he hung onto the bag.

Dwarf Duffy went down so fast a minute later that he carried second base off its moorings and fifty feet into left field.

By the end of the third inning Sim Meeker had released four men and fined all the rest. He finally had to get in the game himself, and Chopemout let him go down to second like lightning when he tried to steal. That made him worse than ever.

It came to the last inning. Dwarf Davis was on first, and started to steal, and the pitcher, instead of throwing to the plate, stepped out o' the box and lined it to second. Dwarf saw the ball and tried to stop, but couldn't.

His feet was still, but he was movin' irresistibly towards second. Then he starts to run back to first, and back and forth they dodge, and the first thing you know Dwarf falls down on his back and starts sailin' back to first by just waggin' his arms—or so it seemed.



Took Steps Twenty Feet Long.

Some of the Swattburgs beat it for the fence, scared; but Sim Meeker and his second baseman pile onto Dwarf with the ball, and the next minute all three are hurled back to first, and with a noise like thunder somethin' in the insides of the Clancy Consolidated Base Stealer and Catcher's Companion bursts.

It may have been a nefarious plot, as Sim Meeker says, and we did have to play the game over; but it busted up the Swift-footed Swattburgs; for the players deserted Sim for his harsh treatment when they were up against that machine. So we beat 'em in the series.

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