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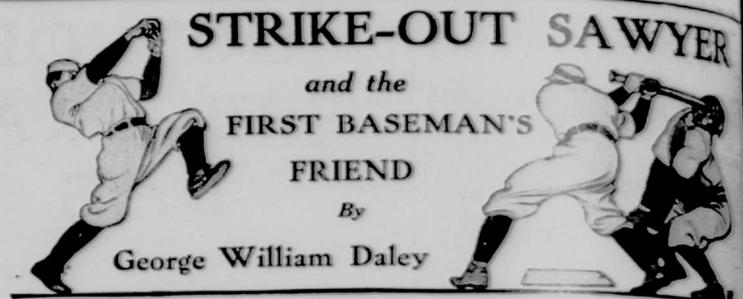
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The Instalment of **ON MANY TRAILS** Announced for this Issue **WILL APPEAR** in the **AUGUST 19 NUMBER**



By George William Daley

I CAN'T say that Long Arm Leary was the laziest ball player that ever lived, but he sure had a shade on any member of the famous Sluggitt Corners nine. Though his arms reached to his knees, and he was six foot tall, he hated to extend himself for wild throws; but with such stars as Chopmout Clancy at short, Chicago Clem at third, and Sawed Off Spotts at second, who were always making seemingly impossible stops an' hurlin' 'em across the diamond from all sorts of positions, he had to stretch both long arms and long body more than once.

It wore on him so, this wild throwing business, that he got talking about it in his sleep. He'd complain to the manager, but Sure Eye Simmons took the part o' the in-fielders who tried for everything and made those electric stops. One of Chicago Clem's stunts was to stop bunt hits with his feet and kick the ball across to first, all in one motion. It was a great play, but of course you couldn't expect him to split first base on a kicked ball. That was what got Long Arm Leary sore.

One night he saw a pool game on a new-fangled table where the balls roll into the pockets and through channels under the surface and fall into a box at one end. He examined it, and slept sound that night for the first time in a month.

Two days later we went out to practise, and, lo and behold! the diamond was dotted with little white disks sunk in the ground. We looked at 'em, and finally Clancy gave one a pull and it snapped up, disclosing a hole going slanting in the ground, lined with brass.

By that time Long Arm Leary was out of the dressing-room, an' when he seen us lookin' at the hole he smiled like a cat that knows where the canary is.

"Guess I got you guys with the exaggerated throws beat this time," says he. "Guess Long Arm Leary don't turn round an' twenty-three it for the bleachers after no more hurls wilder than a 'Pache Injun. Guess these here blessed arms of mine won't be most tore off reachin' for balls that are tryin' to find Mars or some other place up in the sky."

And then, with the most self-satisfied chuckle you ever seen, he explained what the little white disks was for.

He had had a system of brass pipes put under the diamond, and all converged at first base. There was a dozen holes around short-stop and second base and third where you could drop balls into, and then a current of compressed air ketched 'em, and, whisk! they were sailed under the ground to first, and Long Arm Leary just reached down a hand and grabbed 'em as they came out of a hole right in front of him.

We just screamed when he showed us how it worked. A ball batted to the in-field was stopped, the fielder lifted the disk, dropped the ball, and quick as a flash Long Arm had it—long before a runner could get half-way to first.

"Talk about your lead-pipe cinches," says he, after it'd been tried a dozen times. "This is my little brass-pipe cinch. It's to be called the Wild Throw Nullifier, or First Baseman's Friend, or something like that, and old man Leary's goin' to patent it an' sell it all over the country."

We tried the Wild Throw Nullifier that day against the Swatburg team, and they never had a chance. I was in the box, an' all I had to do was to keep them hitting it on the ground, and the rest was easy. They didn't beat out a bunt, and Chicago Clem was grateful, for his feet were getting sore kicking them over to first so often.

Of course, the Swatburgs kicked, and of course it did 'em no good, for the umpire we had saw it was a great invention an' let it go; and when a Swatburg in-fielder gathered up a grounder and dropped it into one of the holes, of course Long Arm Leary didn't turn on the compressed air, and our man got a home run.

We had a great celebration that night, but we left a watchman at the park to see that the disgusted Swatburgs didn't wreck the great machine, and we prepared to take another ball from them the next day, all of us voting that Long Arm Leary's head was as long as his arms.

I got around to the grounds early next day and found the watchman asleep with two bottles that had had whisky in them by him. But I never suspected nuthin'. And then the

ground keeper raised a howl that he couldn't find the nozzle of the fire hose. But he suspected anything then, either. The game started with us in the field, and Wild Throw Nullifier had worked fine a couple of trials, the in-fielders were scoring up grounders fine as ever, and everything pointed to another easy win.

Somebody has said that the great American game of ball isn't over till the last man is out in the last inning, but I've got him beat. Some games is over before the first man is out, and this was one of them. Only we didn't have it figured right. We allowed it was that had it piped; but alas for Long Arm Leary an' his invention! somebody else had it piped, and we didn't know it.

The audience was busy making bets whether the Swatburgs would score, and we'd noticed we'd seen men f'm Swatburgs goin' round and picking up those bets they knew somethin'. But we never knowed.

We were busy watching Long Arm Leary an' the First Baseman's Friend.

Of course, the Swatburgs went to bat first, and of course Puternose Pinkney, who was working in the box for us that day, pitched so they'd put 'em on the ground. If we noticed we'd seen that better tried to knock the ball on the ground, an' did; an' if we'd looked again, we'd have seen their eyes didn't follow the ball at all, but were glued on Long Arm Leary on first base.

Clancy got the ball an' dropped it swift into the first little hole he saw. And then Leary crouched down to get the ball as it spouted out and laugh at the runner.

He didn't laugh. The ball spouted out, right, but with it came—swish! forty gallons of dirty water, like takin' the plug out of a hydrant, and it all hit Long Arm Leary's devoted chest. Up in the air he went and over on his back, and the ball, propelled by the force of the compressed air, or the water or both, shot over into the bleachers, an' before it got back to us the Swatburgs had a run.

Laugh? Yes, everybody laughed, Long Arm Leary looked so funny. But he was game. He got right out in his wet clothes and yelled for 'em to start play again. He figured some little spring had leaked into the pipes, and as it'd be all right.

The next batter hit to Chicago Clem, and he fielded it clean under one o' the disks. Again there was an ill-disguised chuckle from the Swatburgs bench, an' again Long Arm Leary was soaked, and again they got another run, for the ball went into the bleachers a second time.

Hot? Despite all the cold water that'd been poured on him, Long Arm Leary was the hottest man you ever saw. He waited his chance now, an' we all saw an evil glimmer in his eye that didn't mean any good for the man he went up against.

The Swatburgs captain was up. The ball went to short, and Chop dropped it into the hole like a flash. Then as the runner came tearin' down the line Leary's long arms went out. He grabbed the man, bent him over, and held his face in front of that hole and touched the compressed air spring.

The water that drenched that squirming pair was madder than any of the rest. And then the ball, following out, hit the Swatburg captain in the eye, an' he thought it was Leary. He punched Long Arm, and got punched back. And in two minutes two riot calls and a fire alarm had gone in, and everybody was mixed up on the ground at first base tryin' to stuff each other down the compressed-air holes.

Then somebody pulled on the compressed-air spring, and the Leary Wild Throw Nullifier kept pouring out fifty gallons a minute of muddy water on a crowd that didn't want anything but fight; but their fight soon played out, an' the water cooled 'em off.

Sure Eye Simmons took the First Baseman's Friend out that night, and he found that them underhanded Swatburgs had connected the brass pipes with the city water pipes. We all agreed that it was a low-down trick. You can't teach honesty and square dealing to some kinds of people.



Found the Watchman.



Held His Face to the Hole.