

FREAK BASEBALL  
YARNS OF YEARS  
AGO



AS TOLD BY DAN  
M'GUIGAN TO  
MARK

The Spiders were on their spring training trip, and morning practice was in full sway. The recruits were working like Trojans under the blazing southern sun, seeking to impress their manager with their ability.

Dan McGuigan, the veteran catcher of the team, was lolling at ease on the bench, looking with tolerant eye at the toiling youngsters. He had earned his



rest teaching the young pitchers how to shoot, and was in a communicative mood. He indicated a rookie who had just pulled a flashy play, pointing at him with a gnarled paw.

"There's that kid killing himself off by overwork. He's fast, but it ain't always the fast guys that win the game. Managers would laugh at me for that, but

I'll prove it to you by a story. You must recollect all this happened before the national commission crabbed this side graft, and put a stop to us stars ringing in on a little of the soft change, playing at county fairs, tournaments and such when the club didn't need us. I wish that rule had been passed before my time, though the rube money did come in handy after a bad day with the layers at the old Hawthorne track.

"I was in the clubhouse one afternoon after a game when Frank Key, our star pitcher, had shut out the Lions. All the boys had beat it for home, and me and Frank were preparing to do the same, when a guy oozed in the door with Squash Corners written all over him.

"Is this McGuigan and Key?" says he.

"That's us," says I. "But why be so formal. Just call us Dan and Frank." I was a little curt, thinking he was a bug horning in to salve us about our great playing. Them guys get awful tiresome.

"Sure," he answers, apologetic, but hustling right along to what he has on his chest. "My name's Slocum, Henry Slocum, and I'm manager of the team down at Belleville. We're playing the