

The Free Press Short Story

GREASED PIGSKIN

By JOHN SCOTT DOUGLAS

LANCASTER'S fourth down ended on our five-yard line. The distance made was measured, but it fell short by a foot of being a first down. Northern State claimed the ball with the score six to nothing against us, ninety-five yards to go, and three minutes to play! My knees shook with fatigue as I wiped the mud from my face and slouched forward to join the huddle.

Discouragement was written on every face except that of Captain Jay Edwards. Our tall, lean captain, who was known as "Breakaway" his pseudonym was well earned. Given any sort of a chance, he was away with the ball, slipping through the smallest hole in an opposing line for a gain. To-day he had stood no chance. The mud and the superior weight of the Lancaster line had made it impossible for us to stem the tide of defeat.

Edwards threw his lean arm about my shoulders, grinning as cheerfully as though the score had been twenty-one to nothing in our favor. "Not beaten yet, are you, Scottie?"

I grunted. What did it take to discourage our captain?

We went into our huddle. Edwards said, "We'll try a pass—"

Robert Carter, the heaviest man on our team, scowled. "We haven't completed a pass to-day. A greased ball would be easier to pass!"

Edwards smiled cheerfully, his blue eyes lighting up. "And if that fails, I'll get behind the line—"

"What if you're nailed there?" I demanded apprehensively.

"That's a chance we'll have to take." We got into position again, Harvey Miller hunched the muddy ball. A cold drizzle slashed our faces as we confronted the confident smiles of the Lancasterians. My hands were numb and stiff.

Harvey passed to Robert. The line held passably well while I sprinted for position. The ball slid in Robert's hand, however, and flew crooked. I raced for it, slipped, staggered erect, and grabbed at air.

Who formation again, I glanced at the clock. Two minutes!

My heart sank as I reflected on the results of our failure. Northern State was a small Washington college. We had never held a football championship, but that year, with the lightest team on the coast, a line averaging 167 pounds, we had decisively whipped three big college teams who had never given us a second thought. Speed had done it—speed and "Breakaway" Edwards. To-day we had been unable to employ speed, footwork or passing, due to the steady downpour. The miracle was that the score piled up against us had not been larger.

The whistle blew. The ball flew back. I tackled my man and thought for a moment that I was hitting a brick wall. Something atreacked past me then, and I managed to raise to see Edwards twisting, dodging, breaking away from the men who were trying to stop him.

Our stands had been girted as a small boy on a rainy Fourth of July. Suddenly they became hysterical. They knew what Edwards could do, given half a chance. They saw some one hurtle toward him from the side—and miss. Only one man now blocked his way. My breath caught in my throat. The stands thrilled and shrieked. Edwards was being driven relentlessly toward the side line by the one man who blocked his run.

Suddenly that player dived. Edwards flashed toward the side line, skirting it to the danger point, and the tackle's fall by inches.

The tackle, however, was on his feet in an instant. The thunder behind Edwards. The stands laughed at his futile pursuit. Suddenly however, Edwards slipped. He caught himself, and started forward again, but the player behind was on his heels. Edwards ducked, throwing his pursuer off his stride.

He reached the line. The Lancaster "at all costs" but setting too late, threw himself forward. Edwards crashed to his face, the hall upon which he was lying safely over the line.

I observed that his face was white and twitching as Edwards waited for the kick. He held his left arm pressed against his body. The ball rattled back, and his foot was in position for the kick. Lancaster tried to break through. One Lancaster man succeeded, but the ball sailed safely over his outstretched hand, crossing the bar for the extra point.

The huddle cracked. Our stands went crazy then. We had won, seven to six. In the locker room, Edwards dressed with difficulty. The doctor passed by, stopped, came back. "What's wrong, Breakaway?"

Edwards looked ruefully at his wrist. It was swollen and discolored. "I don't know doc. It hurts like fury, though."

The gray-haired doctor examined it for a minute, with tender fingers; then his lips pursed. "Better come with me, and we'll have that X-rayed."

Edwards' blue eyes shadowed. "Come now, doc! That's just a bad sprain, isn't it?"

The doctor did not smile. "I'm afraid it's a compound fracture."

"Compound fracture? Wh—why, it couldn't be! With a compound fracture of the wrist I couldn't play—"

"For the rest of the season," finished the doctor. "I hope I'm wrong!"

"For once I do, doc!" I cried. "What would our team be without Breakaway Edwards? A second-rate bunch—"

"Nonsense!" snorted Edwards. "I'm the only second-rater on the team! Anyway, by the next game with Emerson, I'll be in the line-up!"

Every one of us went along with Edwards and the doctor. We had to find out whether or not it was a compound fracture of the wrist.

It was!

Our next game seemed to bear out the anxiety we had been feeling. We played Emerson College. Emerson had beaten no other college during the current season. She came close to defeating us. We were on the defensive during the whole game. Only a fumble on the part of one of the Emerson players enabled us to win by a meager six to nothing. We had usually won the right to meet the Oregon Webfoot for the Northwest Championship. Oregon College, like ourselves, had not a single defeat registered against them. Their margin of victory in every case, however, was greater than ours. Add to this fact that the game was to be played on Oregon territory and that our team averaged twenty pounds lighter than Oregon's and you will see why our spirits were low.

A big express package arrived before one of our practice sessions. It was addressed to the team, so we all tore into the wrappings. Inside the package was nothing but a broken drum. On one side was scratched, "Why does this remind you of the Webfoot?"

Robert Carter ran his fingers through his curly black hair and looked questioningly at Edwards, who had come to watch the practice, his arm in a sling. "Now what can that mean?" demanded Robert. "They wouldn't send us a drum for nothing! And the wouldn't be implying they're broken!"

Edwards grinned cheerfully. "It's an old one. A drum with a hole in it can't be beaten; the Webfoot are confident."

Robert's dark eyes flashed. "Why those concocted young—"

"We'll fix that," Edwards interrupted him.

He found a piece of pasteboard, and printed: "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." He placed the drum on a table and the proverb above the drum.

Robert's stern face relaxed into a smile. "Not a bad idea! Whenever we start to get mad thinking about that drum they sent us, we can remember the proverb and work a little harder at practice."

So Edwards turned the drum into a boomerang by placing that proverb above it. We practiced with new verve, determined to make the smart contenders for the Northwest Championship pay for their overconfidence.

Edwards kept insisting that the only way we could beat the Webfoot would be by passing. We agreed with him; but we found passing too difficult during rainy weather that we neglected it when it was wet; and I never have seen a rainer fall! The result was that our passing became worse instead of better.

As if luck had not been sufficiently against us losing Edwards, Robert Carter, our heaviest man, came down with influenza. For two days an increasingly large number of cases were reported at the infirmary. The president then closed Northern State for a week to prevent the disease spreading. We were not even able to hold football practice because of the possibility of contagion. The game with Oregon College was just nine days away! We forecast defeat.

Edwards however, was far ahead of us in vision as he was in his playing. He went to see the president. He received a written order that all the members of the team who so desired could take a trip that a tug was making in Puget Sound to obtain soundings of water depth in various obscure portions of the sound.

"Now how in the world did you manage this?" I demanded in astonishment. Edwards grinned. "Well, the prey would like to see Northern State win the football championship of the Northwest for the first time. And I pointed out that there was less danger of contagion if the team was kept away from congested centers."

I shook my head dubiously. "I don't see how taking a trip on a tug is going to help us get a championship. Why can't we go somewhere and continue to practice until chasses begin again?"

Edwards' blond face lighted with a smile. "That's just what we're going to do," he said emphatically.

"The result of his plotting was that every member of the team joined the expedition. We all felt that there was something behind the trip besides the need for a change."

When the tug was safely out in the sound, Paul Thornberg, a lean, bronzed Sophomore, demanded, "Well, captain, where's our equipment?"

Edwards opened a package he carried under his arm. "Here it is!"

He tossed a football at Paul. Paul clutched it, and it alighted through his hands. His eyes widened as he stared at the black on his hands. "You egot! You've dropped that ball in grease!"

"No," Edwards corrected him. "I smeared grease all over that ball. I didn't drop it. You're the one who dropped it!"

Paul made a wry face. "All right," he said "I bit on that one. Now that that's over, let's have another ball!"

"There aren't any other balls," declared Edwards.

"No other balls!" I ejaculated. "What if this ball goes overboard into the sound?"

"We'll have to dive for it," declared Edwards calmly.

The other fellows circled him and their glances were hostile. "Just what is the idea of this cruise, anyhow?" some one demanded hotly.

"To teach you fellows a passing game! You wouldn't practice passing when it rained because it was hard to hold onto the ball. Now you can practice under far greater handicaps—or all and look at the sound for eight days!"

Paul's face flushed. "You mean that we have to play with a greased ball? And when that ball goes overboard, as fracture of the wrist."

"It's sure to do, we have to dive in for it!"

A twisted smile quirked Edwards' mouth. "Exactly! The ball is going overboard a lot—at first. When it goes overboard, the person whose fault it is will have to dive after it if we continue to play. Then he can go down into the boiler room and dry out. The point is that the penalty of every miss is a thorough ducking—in-ly-water. Unless I miss my guess, there won't be many misses by the end of eight days!"

We soon saw that the joke was on us, and we realized that severe measures had been needed to make us practice passing before the game with the Webfoot. Passing has never enjoyed quite the popularity on the west coast that it has on the east. Our coach and Edwards had been two of the first to realize its strategic advantages to a light team playing a heavier team.

Paul picked up the ball he had dropped, passing it to me. I clung to the slippery pigskin with the greatest difficulty, and shot it to another fellow.

Edwards joined in the passing game, although he was able to use only his right hand. Finally the ball struck his hand, splattered off, and shot over the side. He pulled off his leather jacket, determined to go after it. Paul realized that there was no way of keeping Edward from taking his share of the punishment except by beating him to it. He tossed off his Mackinaw and dived over the side.

In several strokes, he had overtaken the ball and put the string between his teeth to hold it. One of the other fellows had meanwhile run to the rear of the boat to throw him a life preserver on a rope. Paul caught it before the slowly-moving tug had passed him by, and we pulled him in. He ran down to the boiler room to dry his clothes and himself.

The possibility of a ducking added a zest to the game. By lunch time, three more fellows including myself, had gone down to the boiler room to get dry, but we still had the ball!

When we quit practice at five, six more had been ducked. Paul, coming up with dry clothing, had missed the first ball thrown to him, and had dived in a second time. As the days passed, however, there were fewer and fewer duckings.

At the end of the eight days, the skipper of the tug permitted us to disembark at Port Angeles. We took the ferry to Seattle, and reported at the dormitory with just time to pack before taking the train to Oregon College.

Morning dawned dark and cloudy. After breakfast Edwards started us singing. "Punny how song somehow raises you out of the dumps! We got off the train in a cloudburst and not one of our faces were downcast."

When we reached the field, however, it was a different matter. The cup had come out; but it would obviously do us no good. The field was a wet, gummy mass.

"Wish I could be with you," said Edwards as he turned over the capitancy to me. "Don't forget you can pass!"

I shuddered when I looked at the team opposing us. They were big, brawny fellows! If we did pass the ball, would we be able to get away on such a field.

The captain of the Webfoot, team smiled grimly at me. "Remember the drum," he muttered. "We can't be beat."

Did he think that had been working on our minds all this time? I did not reply, but I thought of the proverb Edwards had placed over the drum, "Pride goeth before . . . a fall." Perhaps so; but it did not seem to me that we had a chance to make the Webfoot fall on a field like this one.

It was our kick-off. Paul kicked to their twenty-yard line and the Webfoot carried the ball back fifteen yards; then they began their steady march down the field. They made first down after first down and our light team could not hold them. Eventually they had a touchdown and converted to make it seven to nothing.

They kicked to us. Our line failed to hold, and our man signaled a safe catch on the twenty-five yard line. We line plunged for a total gain of three yards in three plays; then I deliberated between a kick and a pass. Ordinarily I would have said kick, but I had to chance a different form of play.

I recklessly ordered a pass, giving the signal. Paul ran forward to receive. The muddy ball came straight toward him. My heart stood still. Would he

DOMINION EXPERIMENTAL VALUES Weekly News Letter

Manures and Fertilizers for Vegetable Crops

The use of fertilizers, barnyard manure and green manure in the growth of cabbage and tomatoes has been under investigation at the Central Experimental Farm since 1924. A 4-8-5 fertilizer mixture was applied for early cabbage at the rate of 1,000 pounds per acre; first, alone; second, with an application of 10 following the turning under of a green tons of barnyard manure per acre; third, crop of sweet clover and, fourth, with barnyard manure and green manure. The crop of tomatoes following the cabbage was not fertilized.

A summary of the results of this experiment shows that the commercial fertilizer increased the total yield of the cabbage by 45 per cent. and of the tomatoes by 108 per cent. Used in conjunction with the fertilizer the turning under of a green sweet clover crop proved of alightly greater benefit to the cabbage crop than an application of 10 tons of manure per acre. With the tomato crop, however, the green manure did not materially increase yields, while barnyard manure gave large increases.

Meal Mixture for Pigs for Winter

For pigs newly weaned and up to four months of age the following meal mixture is recommended by the Animal Husbandry Division: Middlings, 3 parts; oats, 2 parts; shorts, 1 part; bran, 1/2 part. Three pounds of skim-milk or buttermilk per pound of meal mixture should be fed at this stage. The following meal mixture is recommended when the pigs are between four and five months old: Shorts, 2 parts; oats, 2 parts; barley, 1 1/2 parts; bran, 1/2 part. With one pound of this mixture feed two pounds of skim-milk or buttermilk.

From the time the pigs are five months old and weigh about 150 pounds up to market weight, they may be fed the following finishing ration: Shorts, 1 part; oats, 2 parts; barley, 2 parts. With one pound of this mixture, feed one and one-half pounds of skim-milk or buttermilk.

A Household Medicine.—They that are acquainted with the sterling properties of Dr. Thomas' Electric Oil in the treatment of many ailments would not be without it in the house. It is truly a household medicine and it is effective in dealing with many ordinary complaints. It is an inexpensive medicine. So, keep it at hand, as the call for it may come unexpectedly.

ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER

A man who has attained a position of responsibility, paying him a salary of a hundred thousand dollars a year, was asked the secret of his success. He replied that it had been a simple process of continuously putting one foot in front of the other.

That sounds simple. There is nothing spectacular about it, nothing beyond the capacity of an average human being. Yet it means progress. If you keep putting one foot in front of the other, continuously, week after week, month after month, year after year, you are bound to get somewhere. Continuously is the important word in this formula for success. Everybody puts one foot in front of the other at times, but so many people do a lot of loafing in between. So many turn "hitch-hikers" and stand with their thumbs up, waiting for somebody to come along to give them a lift. This world, therefore, is full of disappointed people.

The majority of you are not conscious of any spectacular talent, and outstanding ability, but this need not discourage you. Choose your goal and face it. All that remains is to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

GIVING THAT ADDS

Some one has discovered that our most valuable possessions can be shared without diminishing the store. It is true that we cannot give away money and have as much as we started with, but charging joy instead of making us too happy, makes us more so. When we give another courage, we have added to our own stock. Imparting enthusiasm to those about us fills our hearts to overflowing with this priceless possession.

Of course we should be ready to share those things whose giving leaves us poorer, material things like money and food; but it is comforting to know that the more we give away of the very best things, the more is left for ourselves.

catch it? He did. He was downed, but we had gained twenty yards. I ordered another pass. Another fifteen yards! We marched down the field with a series of passes more quickly than the Webfoot had come down our field with their line bucking and we evened the score.

In desperation, the Webfoot attempted passing—and we got the ball. We scored a second touchdown before the first quarter had ended. We made three more in the second quarter.

Fresh from the rest period, we piled up thirty-four points against the Webfoot's fourteen in the second half. Jay Edwards pounded me exuberantly on the back as I came off the field after that victorious game. "I knew you could do it, Scottie. You didn't need me; you needed confidence. I figured that if you could learn to pass a greasy ball, a muddy one would prove simple. And when I heard of that tug taking soundings, I knew that was the solution!"

"Solution?" I chuckled. "We won this game on the tug, eh?"

THE HABIT OF CHEERFULNESS

Cheerfulness is largely a habit, and so is gloom. Of course some people find it easier to look at the bright side of life than others, and certain experiences of life render optimism difficult, for at least a time. The habit of cheerfulness, however, once established, is a match for almost anything that can happen.

It is popular nowadays to talk as though the optimist is a trying person with whom to live. If you feel that way, you should try living with a pessimist, one of the people who always expect the worst, who are always voicing despondency and gloom. Spend a week in the company of one who is constantly regretting that he was ever born, and any brand of optimism will seem as welcome as sunshine after a day of fog.

Form the habit of cheerfulness. It is true that conditions are not as they should be, but however bad they are, they can make the "best" of them. Whether your life is happy or sad depends largely on the habits you form early, the habit of cheerfulness or the habit of making the worst of conditions.

OH

In an effort to get the kindergarten children to talk freely, the teacher started a conversation about pigs. "Do you have a cat or a dog, David?" she asked of a particular shy child. "No, ma'am," responded the boy; "I'm the only child."

WANDY INSTRUMENT

Bandman (about to practice)—The mouthpiece of my cornet tastes funny to-night. Daughter—Oh, I forgot to tell you, I used it to fill the lamp, as I couldn't

TWO MEASURES OF SUCCESS

A certain rustic visiting a fair is said to have expressed his thankfulness that there were so many devices of which he had no need. It is a good thing to have one's happiness independent of fine clothes and rich food, of automobiles and well-furnished houses, of social prestige and a general recognition of one's importance. Indeed, there are two ways of measuring success; the one, the ability to amass possessions; the other, the ability to do with comparatively little and yet be happy.

IMPORTANT

He was a very ordinary sort of fellow who got suddenly rich by striking oil, and was always trying to impress those with whom he came in contact with his great importance.

One day he rushed into the railway station, laid a \$20 bill down at the ticket seller's window and said, "Gimme a ticket."

"Where to?" asked the ticket agent. "Anywhere. It doesn't make no difference," said the newly rich man. "I got business all over."

EAGER TO GET TO WORK

A man holding one of the most important positions in the business world says there never is a morning when he is not eager to go to his office. That is not because he is especially fortunate in his work, for he has done all kinds, most of it hard, and some of it dangerous. Always, however, his work had stood for the greater part of his pleasure. Shakespeare speaks of the schoolboy of his time, creeping like a snail to school. There are some young people who are grown up or nearly so, who have kept that same attitude toward their work. They must not creep like snails, but they would like to. The bright spot in their day is when their work is done. Such young people are headed for failure, or at the best, only a mediocre success.

LONG SLIDE

"In America there are houses 39 and 40 stories high," said Auntie to Freddie. "I wish I lived there!" said Freddie. "Why?" "I'd like to slide down those banisters."

STOP THAT COLD IN A HURRY WITH Groves' Bromo QUININE

Money Talks —but you must tell it what to say! Let's suppose that the dollars you spend were suddenly given minds of their own—and the job of deciding what to buy for you. They'd have to learn their way around in a hurry. And one of the first things they'd do would be to study the newspapers—every advertisement that discusses something you'd be needing, or wanting. They'd get the latest facts on an automatic refrigerator and sports shoes and tea and motor oil and all the rest. They'd make a business of knowing what where and when to buy. Are you less careful and less constant in your ad-reading than you should be? Do you have to depend on other people for facts that are clearly stated in the advertising pages of this newspaper? Read advertising thoroughly, consider all the points you find there on their merits. Find out in advance exactly what things will best serve your needs—and why. After all, that's the only way to get your money's worth, every time. The real reason for advertising is not to help some one sell something, but to help you buy what you want.