



PARENTS ON THE SIDELINES

by Josh Drake, Jr.

I AM a sports fan. I thoroughly enjoy baseball, basketball, football and all the other games played by our high school boys and girls. Sports are good for our schools as long as we remember that studies should come first and ball games second. But when they get out of hand and the tail starts wagging the dog, then sports become a drawback to any school.

A few years ago the boy's basketball team in the little Oklahoma agricultural town where I live won the state high school championship. I followed them through the season and through the district, regional and state tourneys as a reporter for our local newspaper. In

every close game I became excited and yelled until I was hoarse.

It took several years to build that team of champions, and after they graduated it was necessary to start all over again trying to make good players out of inexperienced ones. Our school may have a good team again in a few years, but it will probably be 20 years or longer before it comes up with another truly great team.

During two basketball seasons, our boys built up the unbelievable record of 61 wins against two losses. They were small boys as basketball players go. Not one of them was over six feet tall, but they proved that high school basketball is not completely dominated by boys from six-and-a-half to seven feet. By speed, poise, teamwork and the will to win, they beat the best in the state. Those boys were magnificent. Time after time they would pull a game out of the fire in the last minute. They were graceful when they won and were good sports on those rare occasions when they dropped a game. However, while our players were conducting themselves like gentlemen, several of our fans were not.

During those two seasons when we had a great team I saw many good church-going citizens lose their reason in the cyclone of hysteria that swept over our town. The craze to win every game became so intense then that it was really frightening.

THE PURPOSE of high school athletics is not only to teach our children how to give their very best while the game is being played but also to be a good winner or a good loser when the game is over. This helps our boys and girls to condition themselves mentally and physically for the responsibilities they must shoulder in later life. However, when the players, coaches or fans develop the attitude that the team should win every game, by hook or by crook at any cost, they are defeating the purpose of high school sports.

I have seen sports fans practically mob officials after the game because of an unpopular decision. Fans should remember that the state high school athletic association selects only officials of high caliber. However, these officials are human and occasionally make honest mistakes like anyone else. But officials are nearer to the plays than the spectators and see them more clearly.

Most of the fans in my home town were well behaved, but a few hotheads gave our whole community a bad name. These rooters were good people under normal conditions, but in heated games they shouted cruel accusations at officials, opponents, and even our own boys. They were so win-crazed that they screamed, "Take the lazy loafer out!" when a player made the smallest mistake. When our boys won, they were called

great, but when they lost a heart-breaker by one point, in an over-time match, the unreasonable fans called them loafers and bums.

One member of the team, whom I shall call Charles, was usually the leading scorer. He was a sensitive lad but tried to cover up by talking loud and walking with a swagger. Some fans thought he should be high-point man in all 63 games played over two seasons. This was too much to expect, for no player can be perfect all the time. However, if his performance in any game was less than perfection, some fans shouted that he was loafing or showing off. Their yelling at him when he made the smallest bobble hurt him deeply. If he hadn't been a very good boy, the riding he took from the fans could have warped his whole outlook on sports.

During an invitation tourney early in the season, our boys lost one of those heartbreakers by one point. The score was 70 to 71. Charles hadn't been his usual brilliant self. Those fans who thought it was almost a disgrace to the whole town to drop a single game said that the whole team, especially Charles, were a bunch of conceited smart-alecks who lost because they hadn't tried.

I wonder how those fans felt when they read my column the next day. Charles had played the whole game with a fever of 101. He had suffered an attack of flu

the day before the tourney began and had gotten out of bed to play.

A TEAM that is crowned the best of all the hundreds of teams in a state must train hard, make many sacrifices, fight desperately every second and have a certain amount of good luck. In those sudden death play-offs, a team is eliminated when it drops a single game. One mistake can make the difference, and often great teams that should have reached the finals are eliminated early. The physical and mental strain on the players is terrific.

All through those two great seasons I watched those boys play night after night while suffering from flu, twisted knees, bad ankles and blistered feet. In several games, boys played when they should have been in bed. They kept driving themselves, torturing themselves, because the "Win at any cost" fever

had hit our community. As they fought their way, limping through the district, regional and state tournament—with the competition getting keener and their nerves stretched to the snapping point—I felt like crying as I watched them warm up for a game. They felt they had to win, or the folks back home would never forgive them.

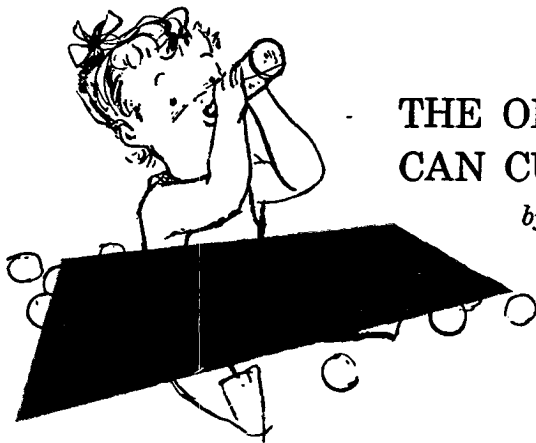
Every player on that great team graduated shortly after being crowned state champs. Since then, the school and fans have been trying to put together another one, one that will bring home a second state championship. I suppose I am the only sports fan in our town who is not anxious for that to happen. If the local fans knew I felt that way they would probably never read my little sports column again. But I sometimes wonder if a team that wins them all, at whatever cost, is good for the players, the school or the fans.

White Magic

Two friends of ours drove through Mexico and as far into Central America as they could get. At one point they even hitch-hiked a ride for their car on a dinky railroad, to penetrate an area that had seldom seen an automobile.

The natives at this remote point were only mildly interested in the many mechanical gadgets with which the Yankees attempted to dazzle them. However, one of their possessions created an absolute sensation. It was an ordinary box of Kleenex tissues. Each time a tissue was pulled out of the box, and a new one popped up in its place, the crowd went wild.

—BILL ARTER



THE ORANGE CAN CURE YOU

by Henry S. Galus

IN HER phone call, the frantic new mother had reported that her infant "couldn't hold a thing in his stomach." Arriving, the doctor briefly examined the bawling boy and reached into his bag.

"Nothing more serious than diarrhea," he told the frightened mother. "Now we won't worry too much about that, will we?" He held up a powdered substance. "This will do it."

She was wrenching her fingers. "But is it a *harsh* drug, doctor—I mean, he's suffered so already . . ."

"Harsh?" The physician smiled. "It's only a slice of orange."

Bed-manneredly, he was oversimplifying. But then the chemical terminology of "methoxylated polygalacturonic acids" might have sounded too ominous.

In any case, the remedy was basically pectin—the fruit derivative used in jellies and preserves since

grandma's homemaking days. Now it is the chief member in a growing family of constituents being isolated from orange pulp and peel with freshly awakened interest in its medical and nutritive worth.

Government and industrial chemists have never torn apart an orange more eagerly, stimulated as they've been by the discovery of at least 100 food and drug values to date. As one chemist put it, "Almost enough to stock a drugstore." Some of the isolated properties are old stuff but have had to await singular prominence until current new lab techniques were devised. Others hadn't been credited to the orange before.

The next time you sip breakfast juice or bite into a section of the fruit, you'll be swallowing vitamins, carbohydrates, enzymes, fats and proteins. That sweet taste of the nutritional nugget is spelled out