

Frankie Parker is one of the few non-Californians ever to win the national junior tennis title. He is a Milwaukee native who migrated to Los Angeles

TENNIS' RHYTHM BOYS

BY BILL FAY

ONLY two non-Californians—Frank Parker and Buddy Behrens—have won the National Junior tennis title since 1932. Why the monopoly? What have Californians got that youngsters in other parts of the country haven't got? Rhythm, mostly. Rhythm and speed. "Court surface is the big factor," Bobby Riggs insists. "Californians grow up on hard courts. Every ball bounces absolutely true. They develop smoothness and timing—the attributes which produce speed.

"Youngsters in the East, Middle West and South play mostly on clay—a slow, unpredictable surface. On clay, the bounce of the ball varies with the weather. On damp clay, the ball skids. On dry or dusty clay, it takes a long slow hop. You have to make constant little stroke adjustments to compensate.

"Consequently, few clay-court players attain the smooth power you see in Budge's backhand, or Kramer's forehand. However, hard-court players like Budge and Kramer, once they get their timing down pat, can make the switch to clay or grass without any trouble. Once you get the rhythm, you never lose it."

The Californians who dominated the juniors—Budge, Riggs, Hunt, Schroeder, Kramer—have dominated American tennis. That's why talent scouts will be watching the impending National Junior tournament at Kalamazoo, Michigan, college. Chances are the winner will be the Davis Cup hope of 1951.

The form sheet says Tony Trabert of Cincinnati has power, Dick Mouldous of New Orleans (the '47 finalist)

has experience, but either George Gentry of La Jolla or Jerry de Witt of Vallejo probably will win. George and Jerry are from California. They've got rhythm.

LARCENY IN THE OUTFIELD

Tris Speaker—the fellow who used to cover center field like a circus tent for the Boston Red Sox and the Cleveland Indians—visited Manager Mel Ott on the New York bench in Phoenix last March. Naturally, the conversation got around to the Giants' pitching, or lack of it. Mel remarked he'd like to find a third reliable starter—somebody to follow Larry Jansen and Dave Koslo.

"Maybe," Speaker said, "you'll find that extra starter out there." Tris waved toward center field. Whitey Lockman, Bob Thomson and Willard Marshall were spinning and running—practicing the almost forgotten outfield art of chasing back after fly balls.

"You mean make a pitcher out of Thomson?" somebody asked.

Speaker shook his head. "About 85 per cent of your outfield hits drop in front of the outfielders," Tris explained, "because the lively ball has backed them up against the fence. But Thomson and Lockman are so fast they can play in close—say 10 feet closer than average—and still back-track to grab balls that go over their heads. That 10-foot edge could cut the percentage of short hits that fall safe. Maybe those kids will snag enough singles and doubles to make winners out of average pitchers."

Thomson made Speaker's analysis look good during the Pirates' first

Polo Grounds invasion. Dixie Walker was on third base, and Jansen was protecting a 2-1 lead in the seventh, when Danny Murtaugh punched a liner into left center. Thomson stabbed the liner on the run and threw Walker out at the plate.

Murtaugh really "singled" into a double play. Thomson had edged forward to within 100 feet of second base—daringly close by modern fly-retrieving methods, but the normal position for Speaker when he was the best of the center fielders around 1920. In pre-Ruth days, Tris played close enough to the infield to cover second base in sacrifice-bunt situations.

Manager Ott applauded Thomson's thievery, but worried when Kiner came to bat. "Imagine," Mel remarked later on, in the clubhouse. "Thomson and Lockman both played Kiner close—practically on the back-side of second! I waved Tommy back, but he just pointed his glove at himself with a surprised who-me look and moved in another foot. I had to remind him that Kiner smacked 51 homers last year!"

In rebuttal, Thomson observed: "By playing close I can catch four or five singles a week. There are only a few hitters who can drive the ball so far I can't reach it. And when they smack it over the fence it doesn't matter how deep you play."

Rival managers credit the Giants' surprisingly steady early-summer pitching to this larcenous outfielding by Lockman, Thomson and Marshall. "You can't keep a rally going on those kids," Cincinnati's Johnny Neun commented. "You have to drive the ball right in the slot to get a hit."

ROUGHRIDING ARCARO

The Jones Boys, Ben and Jimmy, surprised a good many people when they picked Eddie Arcaro to ride Citation after Jockey Al Snider was lost on a fishing trip off the Florida keys. At Hialeah last winter there was persistent talk that Arcaro would never work for Calumet again. Reason: Eddie shoved Calumet's Armed around more than a little, while riding Assault in the \$50,000 Widener.

While Arcaro was committing Assault and battery on Armed, outsider El Mono slipped home in first place. After the race, Jimmy Jones was asked if Arcaro apologized for the roughriding. Jimmy shrugged. "We get six or seven apologies from Eddie every year."

Arcaro salts his conversation with double negatives—expressive and frequently humorous. Once, describing a popular woman owner, Eddie remarked admiringly, "She's a high-class lady. She never has nothing to say." Another time, asked for assistance by an eager apprentice, Eddie gravely advised, "Never get beat by no noses." Eddie's little pearl of sports wisdom ranks with Walter Hagen's helpful hint to a young golf pro. Warned Walter: "Never miss a six-inch putt on the home hole."

WHEN TO USE A SPINNER

Anglers in Northern states who have been experimenting with spinning—a pastime popular in England since the early 1900s—sometimes rush in where fly casters fear to tread. (Continued on page 65)

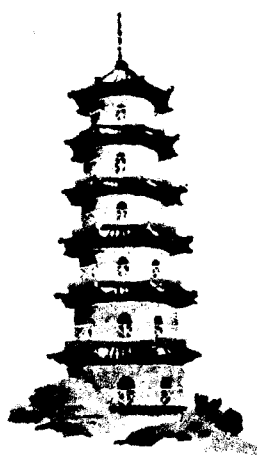
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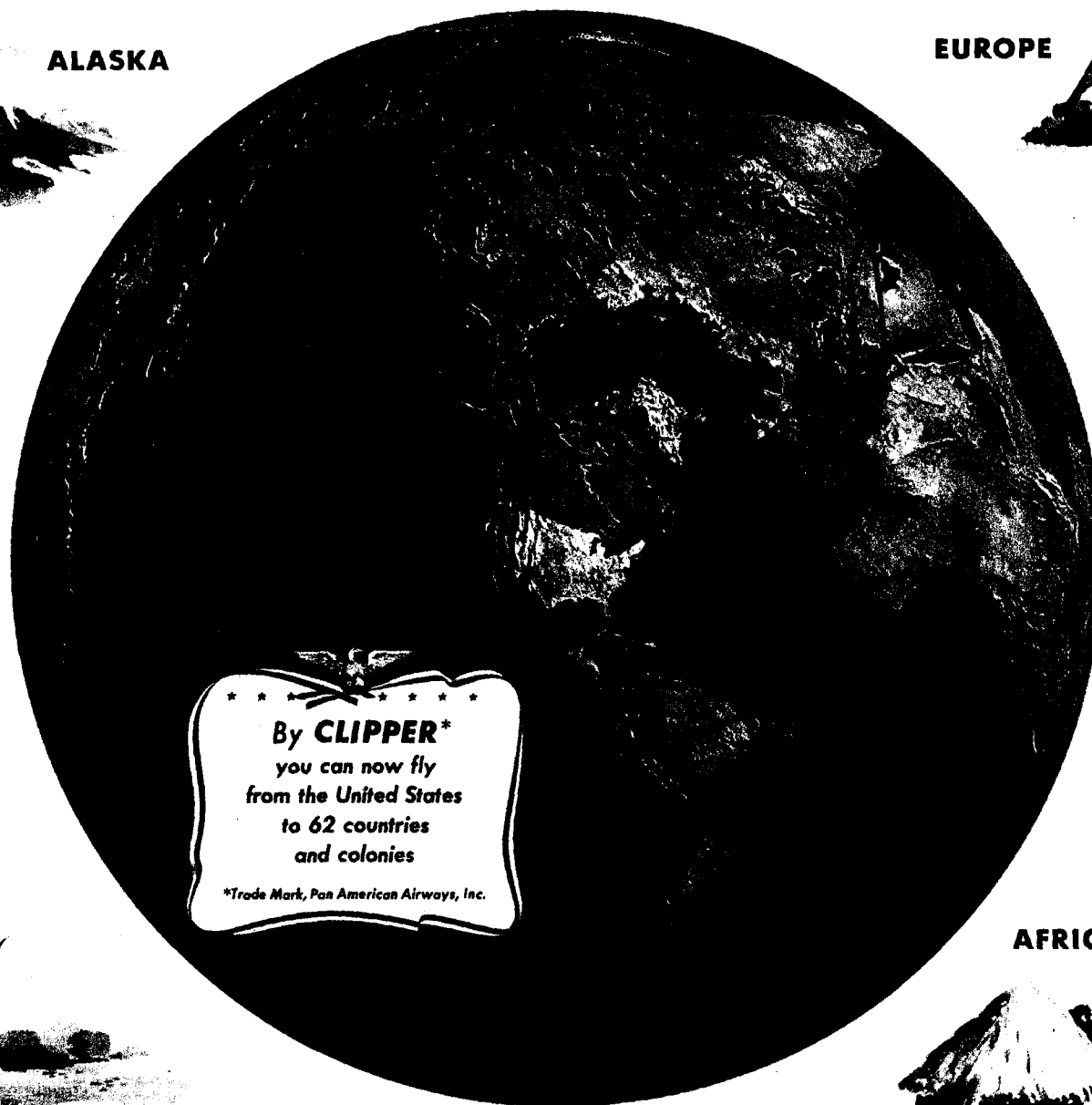
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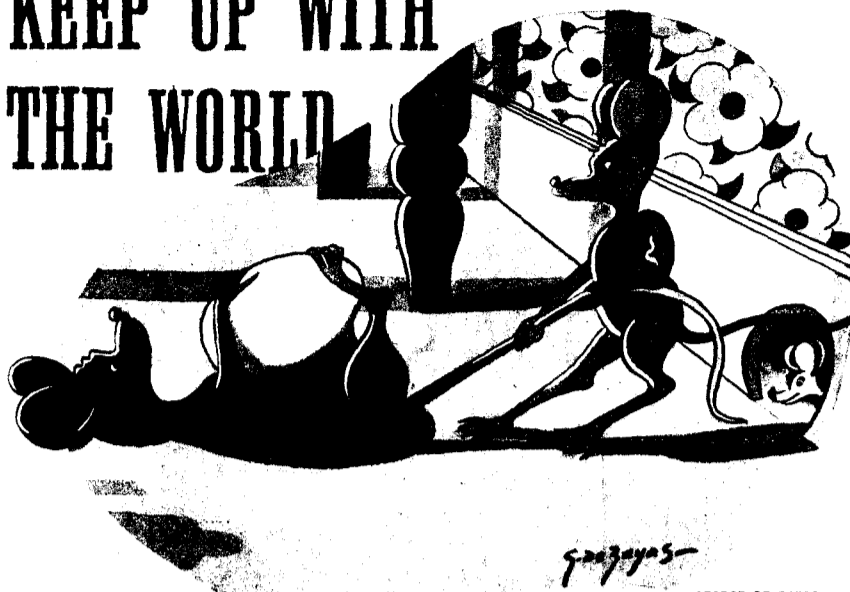
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KEEP UP WITH THE WORLD



GEORGE DE ZAYAS

BY FRELING FOSTER

A strange tale about an egg-stealing method used by rats has been published, with drawings, in many countries since the 13th century. And the story is still widely believed, although it has never been proved by photographs. To transport an egg to a distant burrow, one rat, it is claimed, gets on his back and clutches the egg tightly with his four feet while his partner pulls him by the tail—against the lie of his fur and under and over any kind of obstacle.

The hundreds of strangely named towns in the United States today include Accident, Maryland; Anvil Location, Michigan; Assawoman, Virginia; Birthright, Texas; Boxspring, Georgia; Burnt Corn, Alabama; Cuckoo, Virginia; Doctor Phillips, Florida; Dime Box, Texas; Soso, Mississippi, and Wounded Knee, South Dakota.

Among the Ouled Nails, a tribe in northwest Africa, the girls are not eligible for marriage until they have earned a considerable dowry. So between thirteen and eighteen years of age, they serve as entertainers in the native cafés of Algiers, Tripoli and other Mediterranean ports. As the dowry grows, they display it in the form of gold coins worn as ornaments, totally disregarding the danger of robbery.

One of the most daring swindles in American history was that perpetrated by Charles A. Ponzi through the Securities Exchange Company which he opened in Boston in 1919. Claiming he was making huge profits by dealing in international postal coupons, Ponzi offered a return of 50 per cent on any sum invested with him for 90 days. Before he was stopped, seven months later, through the disclosure that the few demands made on him for interest had been paid out of the mounting capital, he had taken, from some 50,000 investors, about \$18,000,000, half of which was never found. After serving two prison sentences Ponzi was deported to his native Italy in 1934. Today, half paralyzed, he is a charity patient in a hospital in Rio de Janeiro. —By Mary Ford Roslyn, Long Island, N. Y.

One of the strangest situations that ever saved the life of a condemned man arose as a Negro, Jim Williams, was about to be executed in the Florida state penitentiary at Raiford in 1926. After he had been strapped in the electric chair and the black hood placed over his head, both the warden and the sheriff on the case refused to pull the switch, each claiming it was the duty of the other. At the end of their futile and heated argument, which lasted 20 minutes, Williams was unstrapped and returned to his cell. For being subjected to this torture, his sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, and eight years later, for saving two lives on a prison farm, he was rewarded with a full pardon.

Probably the oddest incident in American railroad history was the mysterious disappearance of a refrigerator car from the center of a long freight train during a nonstop trip of 25 miles in Pennsylvania on a night in 1898. Until the car was found by a farmer three weeks later concealed by a group of trees at the foot of an embankment no one could imagine what had happened to it. While rounding a sharp, steep curve, the car had become uncoupled at both ends and, after it had toppled from the rails, the rear section of the train caught up with and coupled itself to the front section. —By Gustav Kaiser, Mt. Vernon, N. Y.

Soon after the mythical actor George Spelvin first appeared on Broadway in the cast of Brewster's Millions in 1907, the name acquired such a reputation for being lucky that it has since been used in the programs of about 2,000 stage plays, usually as the second name of an actor playing two parts. Women and boys in minor roles have also been billed as George Spelvin and George Spelvin, Jr.; and even the Moscow Art Theater, when it came to New York in 1922, had among its players one who was listed as Gregor Spelvanovich.

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