

# JOE FINDS OUT WHY HOUSE OF DAVID DOESN'T DRAW

## It's Because the Fellows Aren't on the Level and They Gladly Admit Guilt

Team Pays Certain Amount Annually Just for Right to Use The Name of House of David and There Have Been Five Teams Traveling at Once.

By JOE WILLIAMS  
Times Special Writer

SEBRING, Fla., April 3.—The tent show evangelists and the hair pulling preachers play to pretty good houses in the dinky towns down this way but the House of David baseball club with its spiritual connotations isn't a draw.

A great many of the people who come to Florida in the winter, especially the grey heads, seem to have an urge for the spiritual and practically anybody with a coon shouter's bellows and an arm movement like a wild left-hander can mount the band stand in the town square and be sure of a respectful audience.



Williams

A year ago there was a preacher over in Tampa who used to let a snake bite him by way of demonstration in the power of faith and when he pitched his tent the good people would come a-running with quarters in their hands and a strange, fierce fire in their eyes.

The night I saw the act the preacher had to let the snake hiss on the snout to arouse his militancy and I found myself wondering if it wasn't one of those things like Jack Sharkey fighting Unknown Winston; but I noticed the good people were properly impressed and came away suffused in a beatific glow.

The spiritual order being what it is among the oldsters down here I was surprised when I went up the road a piece yesterday to see the House of Davids play the Yankees that there wasn't more than 60 bucks worth of trade in the joint.

Rebuke Was Reaction

My first reaction was that this was probably a rebuke to a bunch of clown ball players posing as missionaries but I couldn't perceive where this constituted a more shoddy travesty on the precincts of the Good Book than the old preacher who fed his pet snake on his own blood, or pretended to do so much as peek, and then sent little girls through the crowd hawking his picture.

This lack of response plunged the manager of the Davids, a New York Irishman named Lew Murphy, into bitter melancholy and after the game he told me he wasn't going to bring his troupe of bearded artists back to Florida. "We ain't been drawing peanuts," he muttered. "I'm already a thousand smuckers in the red."

It then came out that the fuzzy-faced gents are cheap imposters, that none of them belong to the House of David and that they grow whiskers to attract attention and excite the yokels. This may account for their lack of stardom among the earnest fundamentalists, and understanding so.

The House of David itself is some sort of religious cult located up Michigan way and it must be pretty low class because anybody who wants the use of the name for a baseball team may get it by the simple process of sending \$1,000 to the boss man, whoever he is. "That's what it cost us," admits Mr. Murphy. "We send 'em a check every year for \$1,000 and that pays for our franchise."

Five Teams at Once

At one time there were five of these phony teams, but now the number has been reduced to two, due to no sudden seizure of shame on the part of the cult but to failure of promoters to put up franchise money. The Murphy outfit spends most of the summer in the East, concentrating on New York state.

"We go big up there," the manager says.

The outfit is made up mostly of semipros and washed-up minor leaguers and is about as distinguished as you might wish to season expect such an outfit to be. They played 240 games last season so you can imagine what kind of baseball they play and what kind of teams.

They frequently play three games a day, that is, one in the afternoon and a single at night. They carry their own lighting equipment, and travel from town to town in battered old cars, crowding in with the bat bags, the luggage and the electrical equipment. Whiskers they rode all night and all day and then got out and played a night game at Mobile, Ala. "At that we have it pretty soft," said Moose Swaney, the team's only left-handed pitcher. "We never have to save."

Moose Is Veteran

The Moose is one of the veterans of the outfit. He is crowding 50. He used to pitch for Seattle, Newark and Reading in organized baseball. Every year come March he starts letting the spinach form on his noble pan, gets in a fluster and sets out for Florida to join the other "passion players" as he calls them. Last year he pitched 60 ball games.

"I don't pitch as many as I used to," he apologized. "I'm getting a little old."

Alabama Pitts is down here with the outfit, but the Frank Merriwell of Sing Sing is opposed to a bush. Mr. Murphy is opposed to it. "If I put Pitts behind a beard the people won't recognize him. He'd look like all the rest of 'em. I've gotta let him play it straight." If Pitts sticks with the outfit he will be known as a guest star. That's how old Grover Alexander was billed last year. He didn't drape his jowls in moss either.

Any old ball player can't drop any further than the House of Davids. This is absolutely zero in the profession. The whole setup is pretty smelly, the prostitution of the name, the burlesque comedians, whiskers and the grubby existence. But as the Moose philosophizes, "it's a living. And if you like to play ball—what the hell?"

## Change Likely In Golf Team

Tourneys May Cause Shifts In Ryder Cup Squad.

By United Press

NEW YORK, April 3.—With the end of the winter golf season at hand, the job of picking the Ryder Cup team which will invade England late in June is one of the major problems confronting P. G. A. officials.

The team of eight professionals captained by non-playing Walter Hagen, is expected to be named in a few weeks. But even then it may be shaken up, depending on what happens in the two major tournaments to be decided before the matches.

Two Choices Certain

Two men are certain of places on the team—Tony Manero, 1936 U. S. Open titleholder, and Denny Shute, the 1936 P. G. A. winner. The 1937 Open and P. G. A. champions also will be on the team and, if they are not among the other six players selected before those tournaments, the team most probably will be changed.

The Ryder Cup matches are scheduled for the Southport and Ainsdale Course June 29-30. The United States is expected to have one of its strongest teams in history—a team that is hoped will shatter the jinx which in the past has said that a visiting team never wins. In six biennial series played to date, U. S. and Britain each have won three—all on their home links.

The U. S. Open is scheduled for June 10-11-12 at Birmingham, Mich., and the P. G. A. for May 24-30 at Aspinwall, Pa. The P. G. A. is being held in the spring for the first time. Last year it was held at Pinehurst, N. C., in the fall. Henceforth, the title will be decided in the spring to give the winner a chance to capitalize on his championship during the summer.

Several in First Flight

Outstanding contenders, in addition to Manero and Shute, for places on the squad are Henry Ford, Horton Smith, Johnny Revolta, Paul Runyan, Gene Sarazen, Sam Snead and Jimmy Hines.

Three of the best players in the land are ineligible. Lawson Little, twice winner of both the U. S. and British amateur crowns and now a professional, has not been a P. G. A. member long enough to participate. Harry Cooper is British-born and, despite the fact that he is now an American citizen, cannot play. Ralph Guldahl of St. Louis is ineligible because he does not belong to the P. G. A.

Dead Ball Better

Now that's he's out of baseball, Ty doesn't seem to have much interest in the game. For one thing he doesn't like the so-called rabbit ball.

"The days of the dead ball were better," says Ty. "They've lost a lot of the fine points of the game these days, even though it has made for a lot of spectacular home runs. The old game was better."

"There must be something wrong with baseball today. But, of course, it isn't so much in the game itself. You see, there are a lot more competing sports. In the old days we had few other sports and everyone played baseball."

"But now there's football, golf, swimming and all sorts of things to divide the interest of the sports fans. And another thing, the coaches in the schools and colleges aren't familiar enough with the fine points of baseball to interest the youngsters in the grand old game."

Squire Cobb's children themselves have very little interest in baseball. None of them have inherited his ability. One of his sons is a fine athlete, but he is a tennis enthusiast and coaches the University of Georgia team.

Greatest Competitor

There may be some question about Squire Cobb having been the greatest ball player of all time. But there can be no question but that he is the greatest competitor baseball—and perhaps any sport—has ever known. H. G. Salsinger, a Detroit sportswriter, once wrote that Cobb "could endure anything but defeat." No truer words were uttered by a typewriter.

He had the most furious will-to-win any athlete ever displayed. They

Armstrong Leads Midwest Golfers

By United Press

FRENCH LICK, April 3.—Don Armstrong, from the Aurora Country Club, Chicago, held the lead in the opening round of the sixth annual Midwest amateur golf tournament today by shooting a 74, two under par.

He was out in 35, one under par for the first nine. Making birdies on the second and fifth holes, Armstrong scored another birdie on the 10th but slumped for a seven on the 15th hole to boost his score to 39.

More than 250 contestants competed in the opening round over the French Lick Springs Country Club course.

George Dawson, Chicago, winner of the tournament in 1933, 1934 and 1935, was runner-up to Armstrong with a 75; Gus Novotny, Lagrange, Ill., shared third place with F. K. Flegel, Chicago, with a 76.

Grant to Play Joe Hunt Today

By United Press

ATLANTA, Ga., April 3.—Bryan (Betsy) Grant, Atlanta, and Joe Hunt, Los Angeles, meet today for the right to play Wayne Sabin, Hollywood, Cal., in the finals of the Atlanta Invitation Tennis Tournament.

Sabin, ranked 17th nationally, upset Bobby Riggs, Los Angeles, national clay court champion, 6-0, 6-2, 6-2, to enter the final round.

While Grant was idle, Hunt defeated Russell Bobbitt, Atlanta, 6-4, 6-3.

In a holdover doubles match, Elwood Cooke, Portland, Ore., and Martin Buxby, Miami, defeated Bobbitt and Red Enloe, Atlanta, 6-2, 12-14, 6-3.

Both semifinal doubles matches were halted by darkness and will be played today.

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## He's Real Country Squire



TY COBB, GREATEST COMPETITOR IN BASEBALL HISTORY. WEALTHIEST OF THE RETIRED BALL PLAYERS—LIVES QUIET LIFE OF A COUNTRY SQUIRE NOW IN ATHERTON, CALIF. FAVORITE SPORT IS GOLF—SHOOTS IN THE YOUNG EIGHTIES. GEORGIA PEACH, WHO RETIRED IN 1928 AFTER 23 YEARS' LEAD AMERICAN LEAGUE BATTERS 12 TIMES—NINE IN A ROW, STOLE 96 BASES ONE YEAR AND LED LEAGUE IN BASE THEFTS 10 TIMES.

ATHERTON, Cal., April 3 (NEA).—It's hard to believe that Ty Cobb, despite his wealth and his health, is happy.

You see, it's been nine years since he's had a fight and in that time he hasn't spiked anybody or anything except maybe a scattered rumor here and there that he would return to baseball.

Since he retired at the end of the 1928 season, leaving behind him a brilliant trail of records and records, the Georgia Peach has been leading the quiet life of a country squire on his large estate here.

He doesn't have to work. He doesn't have to worry. He just lives comfortably with his wife and three of his five children. Everything is going along as smoothly as Walter Johnson pitching a week-day ball game against the Browns.

But Squire Cobb is so at peace with the world he must be miserable. And they do say that the fire-eating Georgian is thinking seriously of hiring a couple of umpires to cut out and argue with him.

He doesn't like the new ball, or two that he can spike when he's in the mood.

Squire Cobb's chief diversion these days is playing golf. Like Cobb, he's better than the best—when he wants to be. He shoots around in the low 80s, but the boys say that when he's in a head-to-head match with you he'll beat you, even if you are a normal in-the-70s shooter.

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Boyle Enters Three Cars in 500-Mile Race

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Meyer, Cummings, Miller To Drive for Chicago Sportsman.

Mike Boyle, Chicago racing enthusiast is playing a pair of aces and a wild card for the high stakes in the 25th running of the annual 500-mile race on May 31.

With characteristic bluntness the Windy City sportsman laid his cards on the table as the spring training season opened at the Silver Anniversary event at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway and dared other car owners to match them.

His first ace is Louis Meyer, last year's victor and only three-time winner of the world's greatest automobile racing sweepstakes. Meyer won first in 1928, repeated in 1933 and made a spectacular drive to post his third victory last year—a task that may never be repeated in a generation.

Names Cummings

His other ace is not a bit weaker. He is Wild Bill Cummings, one of the most colorful drivers of modern times who won for Boyle in 1934 and is conceded one of the most daring and most able drivers in the big time.

Boyle's wild card is Chet Miller, veteran driver, capable, courageous and always a serious threat.

The playing of this powerful hand will be left to the mechanic of champions, portly, affable Harry (Cotton) Henning, who, in his many years in the racing profession, prepared cars for Pete De Paolo, Ray Keech and other men of speed.

Boyle Stable Set Up

The Boyle stable already has been assembled here within the very shadows of the big Hoosier speed oval. Cummings, local boy who made good in his home town, was as usual, the first out on the 2½-mile speedway a few days ago, whipping his favorite charge about the new surface at speeds better than 117 miles per hour in "shakedown" tests.

It is unusual that such a formidable team be announced so early because it is the tradition of "Gasoline Alley" at the Speedway that much bickering go on before drivers and owners agree on mounts. But the brusk Irishman from the shores of Lake Michigan believes that he has picked the best and openly challenges anyone to match his showdown.

Early rail-birds are of the opinion that this important Silver Anniversary race may be played "according to Boyle."

Chicago, April 3.—Joe Platak of Chicago sought his third straight National A. A. U. handball title today in a championship match against former Champion Sam Atcheson of Memphis.

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## LET'S GO FISHING

By G. H. D.

UNCERTAINTY puts the tang into fishing. If you caught a fish on every cast, hour after hour and day after day, you soon would be ready to take up knitting.

At least that's what we have been told by persons who have been fortunate enough to find such waters. And our own experience bears it out, for once, in the mountains of Idaho, miles from anywhere, we caught rainbows with every cast, with bait, flies, spinners and even the shiny, bare hook; until all the fun was gone from fishing.

For the rest of the two weeks we fished only twice, for food only. If those trout had been a little coy we would have been after them every day.

When a chemist pours a certain acid into a test tube with another acid, he knows what will happen. But when you cast a plug into an Indiana stream, it's all a gamble.

Results depend on too many factors—the season, color of the plug, where it was cast, speed of the retrieve, time of day, condition of the water, position of the sun and moon, strength and speed of the current, the possibility of a change in weather and even (according to some fanatics) the hides and the color of the fisherman's socks.

The only sure thing about Indiana fishing is that anything might happen. Once a carp took a dry fly.

ARGUMENTS for the new taper in fly lines; called the "big head" and "torpedo head," are too convincing to laugh off.

We are conservative to the point of looking with suspicion on all innovations, including new favors in ice cream, and we are not real sure that the flying machine is here to stay, but we will have to admit that it looks like they have something in this new fly line.

Briefly, there are four shapes of fly lines; level, single taper, double taper and now the "big head."

As you know, it is the weight of the line that bends the rod and gives power for the cast. The first lines were level. They have two faults. On large rods they are apt to be so heavy they frighten shy fish and that same weight often is too much for the rod to handle on long casts.

Then some smarty figured out the single taper, where the line is small at the end and increases in size up to the "belly," which gives the necessary weight. This cured the first objection but didn't help much on the second. And it added a new difficulty. The first tapers were too long, and with a long leader the fisherman might find that he was attempting to cast only leader and taper to the fish that rose within 25 feet. This wouldn't do, as you know if you have tried it. You haven't the weight of line that's needed.

BEFORE we forget it, the double taper was just developed so you could change ends when your line wore out or became water-logged and wouldn't float.

Now comes the "big head" taper, and it seems to solve all the problems. It is small at the end, tapers quickly to the large section or "belly," maintains that size for about 10 feet, then tapers back to the small size.

It gives you the weight where you need it: near the leader. Longer casts add little to the strain on the rod because the "belly" length is limited. The only objection that has cropped up to date is that too large a "belly" is hard to keep afloat.

But keep your eye on this new taper. It's a promising youngster.

JOE PLATAK SEEKS THIRD A. A. U. TITLE

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