

# El Camino Continues Uphill Climb

## The Fearless Spectator

By

Charles McCabe, Esquire



At the end, in his home at East Hampton, L. I., he wouldn't have given you a lead nickel for the whole damned human race, with his sons possibly excepted. A bad ticker had bothered him for years. It finally did him in, while he slept.

He was writing letters to his sons, signed "A Cadaver." He often wept over his typewriter. He kept going on black coffee, morphine, and booze. He was tortured, guilty, sad, and sick. He had spent much of his life writing about a child's game: baseball.

He was a mordant and saturnine lad, Mr. Ring Lardner. He viewed life as most English-speaking "humorists" from Swift to Shaw have viewed it: with ferocity and heavy hatred.

He was not the greatest sports writer this country has produced, but he was inconsequently the greatest writer who ever wrote about sports. Especially baseball.

Now a collection of his best work has been put out by Scribner, as "The Ring Lardner Reader." It's a dandy thing and includes some of the fey stuff he wrote on radio for The New Yorker in his last days.

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The true Lardner tone is found in the opening lines of "Champion."

Midge Kelly scored his first knockout when he was 17. The knoockee was his brother, Connie, three years his junior and a cripple. The purse was a half-dollar given to the younger Kelly by a lady whose electric had just missed bumping his soul from his frail little body.

Many of his cracks have gone into the language: "He gave her a look that you could have poured on a waffle"; "Mr. Irvin Cobb is a great reader of books, of which he has a complete set"; "I can't come—it's children's night out and I have to stay home with the nurse."

And the best of all baseball lines, "Although he is a bad fielder, he is also a very poor hitter."

Lardner orchestrated clichés and made the vernacular turn hand springs. Like, "You're bound to get tired of one person, no matter how much they sparkle." And the beauty queen he described as "one little girl, either fourteen or twenty-four."

And, of course, "Shut up," he explained.

After the White Sox scandal in 1919 he had written these lines for the Chicago Tribune: "I'm forever throwing ball games/Pretty ball games in the air..."

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Lardner might have stayed a sports writer all his life—and perhaps been happier—had he not had such fearsome trouble churning out seven pieces a week.

In 1913 on the death of Hugh E. Keogh, Lardner was awarded his column on The Trib. Keogh's column, "By Heck," was considered the best thing of its kind in the country.

When Lardner began to find the pickings thin in the world of sports he stumbled on the technique which was to make him famous. Traveling with the White Sox as a kid writer, he had spent unending hours in hotel lobbies, clubhouses, and dugouts, listening to ballplayers talk. This talk was a potpourri of slang, some printable and some not, and singular nouns mixed with plural verbs.

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One empty day he filled out a column of short dialogue between two ballplayers playing cards on a Pullman. The natural speech of the lowbrow players was an immediate hit and led to the wonderful "You Know Me, Al" stories about a leftie pitcher. Better baseball stories have yet to be written.

The end came on Sept. 24, 1933. Ring was playing bridge with his wife, Ellis and the Gartland Rices. He was so gaunt he used a padded chair. He had another heart attack and had to be put to bed.

## BUBBLE BURSTS

### Montgomery Out Of League Race

Three consecutive defeats have sent Bishop Montgomery spiraling from basketball title contention in the Camino Real League to a battle to remain in in the first division.

Fermin Lasuen, St. Monica, and league-leading Alemany have pasted the Knights in their most recent struggles.

St. Monica knocked Montgomery out of third place on Wednesday with a 44-41 victory, and Alemany tallied a 70-54 decision on Friday to further knock the Knights out of contention.

THREE Montgomery cagers hit in double figures Friday night, but Alemany ran up a 38-22 halftime bulge and stayed even with the Knights the second half.

Sophomore Bob Brown canned 14 markers, Pete MacCarrone added 12 points, and big center Paul Deyden re-

sponded with 10 digits for Montgomery.

FOUR members of the starting Alemany five wound up in the double-point bracket.

On Wednesday, Deyden and Tony Guggiana came through with twin 10-point performances to lead Montgomery in a second-half spurt that was almost good enough to overcome a seven-point St. Monica lead.

ST. MONICA grabbed a 12-10 first quarter lead and pushed the margin to 27-22 by halftime. The lead was good enough to hold off the Knights in the second half.

On Tuesday, Montgomery will take to the Loyola University hardcourt for an 8 p.m. engagement with St. Bernard. The Knights pulled through with a slim win over the host quintet in the first meeting between the two casaba crews.

## Tribe Thumps Valley Five To Maintain Second Place

Unwilling to accept its predicted place as the Metropolitan Conference also-ran, El Camino maintained its second-place position Friday night with a resounding 88-64 basketball triumph over Los Angeles Valley.

Lack of height was expected to plummet the Warriors to the second division this season, but the sharp-shooting Redskins are now deadlocked with Bakersfield for second place, only one game behind conference-leading San Diego.

Former Torrance High cager Bob Moon contributed 25 points to the Camino cause on Friday but still failed to grab high point honors.

VALLEY'S fantastic Stan Swinger sent 26 points skimming through the hoops to keep his club in the game.

Eighteen of Swinger's points came in the first half, but it was not enough to keep El Camino from compiling a 50-39 lead by intermission.

CAMINO began quickly, pulling into an 18-12 lead to all but cinch the game in the opening moments. Moon and 6-5 center Bob Cliborn supplied the push for ECC in the first half.

Cliborn wound up the evening with 11 points. Topping El Camino in the rebounding department was Paul Bush,

who gathered in 11 stray basketballs.

BACKING up Swinger for Valley was Mike Metoyer with 13 digits.

Twelve Warriors found their way into the scorebook in the one-sided contest. It was Camino's second consecutive victory over the Monarchs, who are enjoying a surprisingly disappointing season.

ATTEMPTING to increase its 6-2 Metro mark, El Camino will trek to Cerritos on Friday for an 8 p.m. struggle. Although ECC won the last meeting between the two clubs, it took a fine overtime effort by the Warriors.

In its last outing Cerritos hung a 73-60 defeat on East Los Angeles.

OTHER Metro action Friday night saw Bakersfield turn back once powerful Long Beach, 85-55. The Renegade's top duo of Loren Thompson and Roy Turner bucketed 47 points between them to pace the win.

Turner turned in 24 markers and Thompson connected for 23 points.

San Diego maintained its conference lead with a one-sided 74-44 win over hapless Santa Monica. The Knights grabbed a 44-21 lead at half-time and were never headed.

## Spartans Capture Third Loop Win

Clutch-playing South High overcame an early Santa Monica lead to edge into a tight 41-38 Bay League basketball victory Friday night.

South survived a 20-14 halftime deficit and came back with a third quarter spurge to increase its league mark to 3-6 and push the Vikings further into the cellar.

Don Denson with 16 markers and Mike Barry with 13 points supplied the scoring punch for the Spartans. John Thomas and Ken Halland led South on the boards and Thomas was effective with his tight defensive work.

BARRY WAS rugged in the clutch for South. As the third quarter began, he sank three straight baskets to move the

Spartans back into contention. With 12 seconds showing on the clock, South held a 39-38 lead and Samohi threw up a full court press. Barry was fouled and sank both shots to ice the contest.

THE COMING week will be a busy one for South. On Monday, the Spartans travel to Morningside for a 3 p.m. engagement, and on Wednesday, Redondo will trek to the South gymnasium for another 3 p.m. contest.

Redondo and Morningside both hold first round victories over South. The improving Spartans held cross-town foe North to a 60-55 win on Wednesday as Denson his 26 points to keep South in the contest.



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## Culver City Rips Torrance Quintet

Plummeting to its second straight defeat, Torrance suffered through a frigid first half Friday night and dropped an 85-64 Pioneer League basketball decision to undefeated Culver City.

Culver City, the top quintet in the league, wasted no time in ripping the Tartars. The Centaurs galloped off to a 20-9 first quarter to lead and continued to pour on the steam, rolling into the locker room with a 43-23 lead.

The Cent's usually deadly trio of Jack Reilly, Ken Peterson, and Bruce Peters led Culver. Peterson muscled his way in for 27 points to cop high-scoring honors while Peters connected for 21 markers and Reilly added 14 digits.

TORRANCE ALSO had a deadly trio, but was less effective. Guard Ernie Clayton, finally coming into his own, popped 21 points through the hoop to pace the Tartars. Rugged center Steve Waters contributed 15 markers and Lynn Archibald, at one time the loop's leading gunner, pushed 12 points through.

In his last two outings, Archibald has contributed but 20 points to the Torrance cause. At one time in the season, the all-league forward was averaging 20 markers a tilt.

DEFEAT LEFT THE Tartars with four defeats. Culver and Beverly Hills have both beaten Torrance twice and are now left to battle for the circuit crown.

Torrance made a vain attempt to stay in the ball game after intermission, outscoring the host Centaurs, 14-13, in the third quarter and trailing by a 29-27 margin in the final stanza.

On Tuesday, Torrance will resume the league wars with a 3 p.m. battle at Palos Verdes.

## Aviation Decisions West Five

Tall Aviation simply had too much height for West High Friday night and took advantage of the Warriors' handicap to post a 50-32 Pioneer League basketball decision.

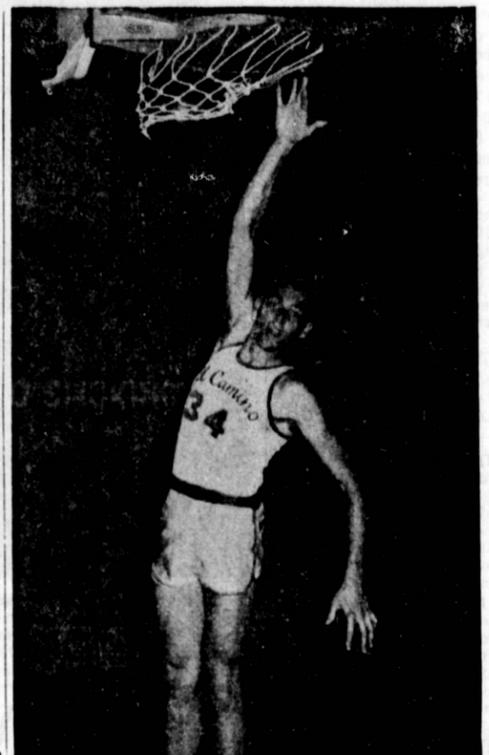
Throwing three 6-4 starters against the tiny Warrior quintet, Aviation outscored the visitors in all but the third quarter to coast to an easy victory.

Jim Lloyd and Gary Dinnel both connected in double figures to pace the Falcons. Lloyd, the league's top gunner, swished in 20 points and Dinnel fired in 13 more markers.

ONLY STEVE COOKE, with 13 markers, was able to connect in double figures for the Redskins. Cooke teamed with center John Cochran, a rugged sophomore center who hauled down 13 rebounds, to provide the majority of the Warrior offense.

One of the major West problems was the fact that five of the seven members of the varsity had been out the past week with flu.

Next on the docket for West will be a 3 p.m. tussle with Lennox at North High on Tuesday. The Warriors owe their first basketball win in history to Lennox.



HI THERE... El Camino's 6-5 center Paul Bush strikes an informal pose after stuffing home two points in a recent Warrior scrimmage. The lanky Bush is a good outside shot with his accurate jumper. The Torrance High graduate will attempt to keep Camino in the thick of the Metropolitan Conference race tomorrow night as the Braves trek to Valley Junior College for an 8 p.m. tussle.

## Micohi Rally Dumps North

Downtrodden North led Mira Costa the better part of four quarters Friday night before succumbing to a frantic final quarter Mustang rally and dropping a 57-51 Bay League basketball nod. It was simply a case of too much Mira Costa height as the shorter Saxons were unable to

gather in the rebounds or halt the dunk shots of big Neville Saner or bigger Joe Ellison. Ellison, a 6-7 center, slapped in 21 points, many coming from the Mustang's version of professional football's alley-oop passes. Micohi would toss the ball into the air and Ellison would reach up and come down with it, canning two points in the process.

SANER, a small 6-6, got red hot in the final quarter, contributing 10 points, and wound up with 18 digits for the evening.

Behind the hot gunning of all-league guard Carey Hubert and surprising Terry Tierney, North moved into the 17-9 first period lead before the slumbering Mustang giants work up.

MIRA COSTA came alive with a bang, catching North mid-way through the second period with a 20-point outburst while the Saxons were totaling half that number.

The Mustangs maintained their lead until one minute before the final quarter when North jumped into a one-point bulge. The industrious Saxons pushed the margin to 45-38 before Micohi came roaring back.

Contributing to the North downfall was a fifth foul called against the top Saxon rebounder, 6-5 center Al Lepper, midway through the final stanza.

TIERNEY wound up with 16 markers for North while Hubert canned 14 points.

On Wednesday, North took a tight see-saw battle from cross-town rival South High by a 60-55 margin.

NORTH led 14-12 by the end of the first quarter, but trailed 27-24 at intermission. A 24-point third quarter spurge iced the contest for the Saxons. South managed but 12 markers in the third stanza.

The Spartans attempted to catch up in the last frame by outscoring the host quintet, 16-12.

HUBERT led North with 18 points while Lepper tallied 14 and Mike Gratzke kicked in with 10 markers.

For South, Don Denson rammed home 26 digits to grab high-scoring honors. Chuck Robinson canned 14 markers and Ken Halland added 10 for the Spartans.

## Teachers Nab Loop Cage Win

Three men hit in double figures the past week to pace the West High Teachers in a 63-50 victory over the First Baptist Church in Tuesday League basketball action.

Tom Hadley, 17 points; Tom Cykon, 16 points, and Manager Forrest White, 11 markers, paced the win. Ken Ellsworth dropped in 20 digits to wind up with high-scoring honors and guide First Baptist.

Bill Reinert contributed 18 points to Thunderburg's 69-53 win over the Shell Jets. Gene Crenshaw and Terry Jones with 16 and 10 points respectively also sparked the winners.

VINCE MARTINIS canned 26 markers and Dean Starkey added 15 more to guide the losers.

Six cagers canned double figures for Bryant's in an 84-39 triumph over Big Nine. Rex Hughes, 18; Bill Clemo, 13; Tike Karavas, 12; Bob Garrett, 11; Mike McConnell, 10, and Tom Reddin, 12, led Bryant's.

JOHN GRAHAM dropped in 13 points for Big Nine.

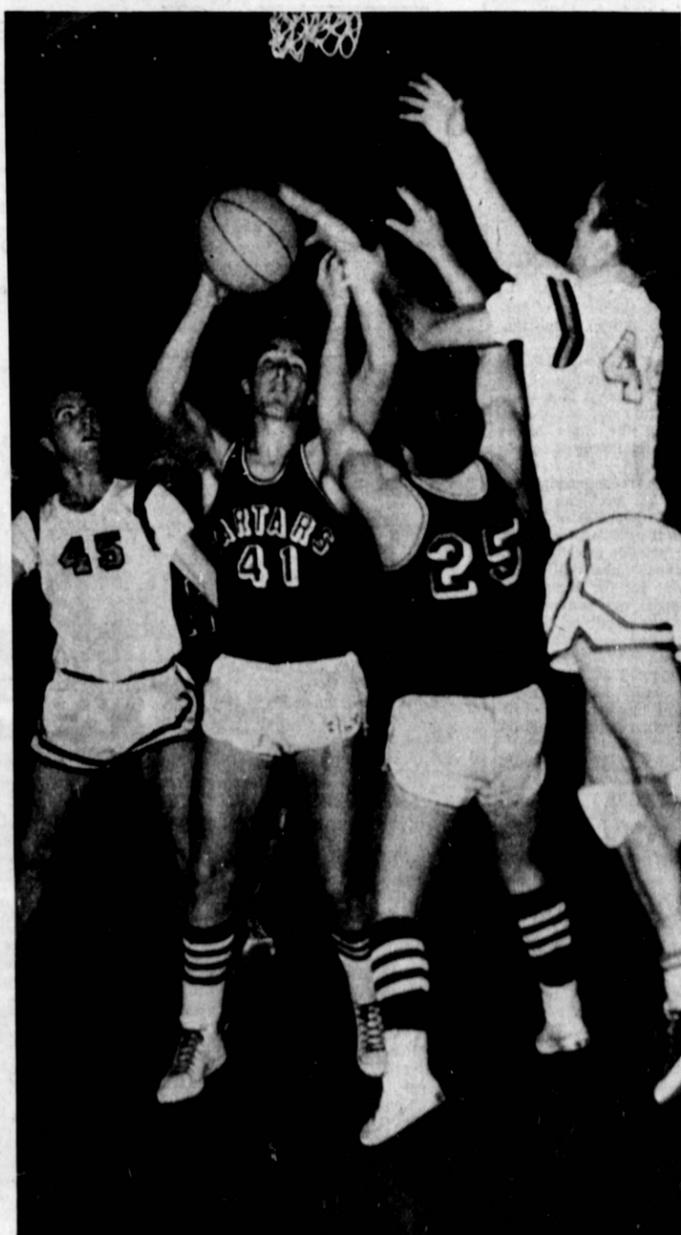
Continuing down the winning path in Thursday League play, Bill Clark pumped in 21 markers and Ronnie Temple added 18 more as Aeronca slipped by AllResearch, 51-41.

FOR AIRESEARCH, John Jacobelli dropped in 14 points and Mike Novikoff turned in a 13-point performance.

Turning in the highest scoring night of the league season, Party House center Richard Ruffell ripped the cords for 38 points as his teammates whizzed by Murphy's, 77-41.

MIKE ANDREWS contributed 13 points for Party House. Mike Kirkpatrick dropped in 15 points and Bernie Siminich and Sam Edwards added 14 and 13 markers respectively for Murphy's.

Other action found McCulloch Motors forfeiting to Harvey Aluminum.



TANGLE OF ARMS... Coming down with a rebound for Torrance in recent fray with Beverly Hills is rugged center Steve Waters (41). Bill Kauffman (25) also attempts to get a hand in for the Tartars while Alan Fay (44) and Barry Fay (45) move into the picture for Beverly Hills. The Fay brothers led the Normans in scoring as Beverly upset Torrance for the second straight time. (Photo by George Herrin)