

Take Him Out of the Ballgame

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By : Mike Stevens

A baseball story about a complete bastard!

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Spikes high, Cal Ojen slid like a weapon into the 2nd base bag. 2nd baseman Larry Sump wanted no part of Ojen, so he walked away from the base, giving Ojen the steal. Cal had entered the game as a pinch runner for the pitcher, Andy Flailer. After swiping the bag, he was replaced by speedster Jackrabbit McClusky. He'd done what he was on the Seemy City Trucking Long-Haulers Semi-Pro Baseball Club to do, play dirty, and play rough. He had absolutely no baseball ability, whatsoever. His only job was to take out someone on the opposing team, and score runs, or steal a tough bag, when everyone knew what he'd be attempting to do. As he returned to his usual seat on the bench, Manager Dick Ralston hollered down,

â At a baby, Ojen!â

Ojen felt proud as he sat down. It wasn't often he got praise from Ralston. He was such a hard man, with a rigid code of conduct. Usually, all he heard from him was,

â Ojen, you suck!â or, â Why am I saddled with a no-talent goon like Ojen?â

He was only on the team because the owner Dave Stew was an old friend of Ojen's, from their prison days. Stew had gotten out, made a fortune off selling questionable merchandise, and bought this ball club. He had a burning desire to win, figured the team could use a man of Ojen's talents, and posted Cal's bail money. After his case was dismissed on a technicality, Cal had joined the team, just to use his only talent of being tough.

Manager Ralston was not happy, and had said, â What kind of dumb move is this? I have enough trouble managing guys that know what they're supposed to do. Now I'm supposed to manage with 24 players who might know what the hell they're doing, and a new guy that definitely doesn't? A guy who can't bat, can't field, but who breaks knee-caps with the best of them!â

Manager Ralston reluctantly had given Ojen an attaboy for stealing 2nd. He figured Cal had played dirty, but was having increasing difficulty with his eyesight. He didn't want to let on about it to anyone. He could see things up close okay, but farther away things were a different story. Managing was his life, and if he admitted he couldn't see too well, and it was getting worse, he would be forced out, so he kept his mouth shut, and pretended to have seen the play.

The score was tied, with 2 outs in the bottom of the ninth, and Cal Ojen had been summoned by Manager Dick Ralston to pinch-run for McGillicutty, who'd singled with one out, and had taken 2nd on a groundout to the right side by Jenkins. Before he took the field, Ojen had been taken aside by owner Stew, and told to score on a single, no matter what he had to do.

Manager Ralston was pissed! He had just been told by owner Dave Stew, that if he wanted to keep his job, he'd put in Ojen to pinch-run. Man, there was nothing worse than having a team owner who was rich, knew nothing about baseball, and was totally ignorant, force his dumb opinions and ignorant player moves, on him. Oh well, he had paid for the team. If he wanted to interfere, it was his right, not to mention, his funeral. The only trouble was, when some stupid move from the owner blew up in everyone's faces, he would take the blame. He would be fired, simply for following the stupid owner's orders.

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The way owner Dave Stew saw it, he would do anything to win this game. For some reason, Manager Dick Ralston wasn't going to put in Cal Ojen, the only player who shared his win-or-else attitude. Ojen was his kind of player, one that would do anything to win. Stew wouldn't accept losing. If the team didn't win that day, his whole day was ruined. How could he go out in public if his team lost? Ralston had just shrugged and said it was just one game. Before you knew it, one lost game would turn into several, and the whole season would be lost. Well, he wouldn't have that. He'd invested too much money, his own money, to lose. He'd made a huge mistake in hiring Ralston as manager. If Ralston didn't want to do whatever it took to win, then he'd order him to do it.

Cal Ojen took his lead off of 2nd base. He hoped for just a single, although this guy would probably strike out. The batter took 2 strikes, right down the middle. Great job, there, ace! Now he'd probably swing at one 3 feet outside, and in the dirt. With the next pitch, Lolowanker lined a single up the middle, catching Ojen flat-footed, and unprepared to run. He'd expected a strike out, not a hit. Consequently, he got a terrible jump, and wasn't halfway to 3rd base when the outfielder fielded the hit, and heaved the ball mightily, and on the fly, directly to the catcher.

What in the hell was Ojen waiting for? With 2 outs, he should have been off with the crack of the bat, screamed Ralston out loud.

Owner Dave Stew leapt to his feet with the hit. The winning run was on 2nd base, in the form of Cal Ojen, and Lolowanker had come through with a hit!

Cal Ojen touched 3rd base and looked to home plate, just in time to see the fricking ball bounce once, and settle into the catcher's glove. He was going to be out by 95 feet. Well, screw that! He ran on, through the stop sign thrown up by the 3rd base coach. Nothing was going to stop him from scoring. It had been his fault he'd gotten such a slow start, and he was looking to make up for that. The catcher wore an egotistical sneer on his face, because he knew the runner was a dead duck. As Ojen neared the plate, he tensed for a collision, lowered his head, and at the same time, swung his fist towards the catcher's mitt. He barreled over the surprised catcher, who lost control of the baseball after having his mitt punched, and who had gone flying backwards, as the ball rolled behind home plate. He reached in triumph and made sure he had touched home plate. The umpire started to call him out, but saw the menacing look shot him by Ojen, and decided it was only a minor league game, wasn't worth getting the s*** beat out of him, and yelled,

â Safe!â

Dave Stew leapt into the air, in joyful bliss. His team had won!

Manager Dick Ralston hated what he'd just seen. That thug disguised as a baseball player, Ojen, had managed to score, by running into the catcher, who'd had perfect position, and punching the ball loose. Now, as the owner celebrated with the rest of the team, the waylaid catcher stayed down. He was hurt! His motionless form was stepped over and ignored by his jubilant squad. Ralston walked over to the hurt catcher, and looked him over. He had been knocked unconscious, and was struggling now to stand up. â Do you know where you are?â Ralston asked.

â 4 fingers, youâ re holding up 4 fingers,â came the reply.

Oh, man, was he out of it. He held up 4 fingers. â How many fingers do you see?â

â Iâ m driving on Interstate 20,â came the dazed reply. Okay, he at least had an active fantasy life.

â This man needs to see a doctor, now.â

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Owner Dave Stew had made up his mind: Dick Ralston was out as manager, and Cal Ojen was in. Ralston had turned out to be a pansy, more interested in good sportsmanship than winning. All Ojen cared about, was winning, no matter what you had to do to accomplish it, which was how it should be. Cal Ojen warily entered team owner Dave Stew's office. He wondered why he had been summoned. Owner Dave Stew barely glanced up from the financial section of the newspaper.

"Hello Cal, can I get you anything, coffee, tea, the manager's job?"

Cal thought he'd heard incorrectly. "Excuse me, Mr. Stew, but I could have sworn you said the manager's job."

"No, Cal, you heard correctly. I'd like you to become player-manager. Are you interested?"

"Hell yes he was interested! Really, me? Hell yes, I'm interested, but what about Ralston?"

"He is a limp-wristed little man. I want a hard man, such as yourself, who wants to win, no matter what it takes," replied Stew.

Dick Ralston had cleaned out his desk after being told he was fired, and Cal Ojen, now Manager Ojen, had put his stuff away, and now sat behind the desk, his desk, working out his strategy for winning the upcoming game. Wow, he was now the manager!

The End

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