



COKER'S GREAT GAME!

By Bob Cherry

Horace James Coker's the world's worst footballer, but even Coker can be put to good use on the footer field, as Bob Cherry's humorous short story proves

FIRST SPASM

Blundell's Brain-wave.

OLD BLUNDELL, the captain of the Fifth, trotted into Study No. 1 the other afternoon looking pretty fed up. The Remove were playing the Fifth at footer, and we reckoned he had come to see us about the match. He had.

"Trot in, old scout," said Harry cheekily. "Take a pew, old bean," invited Frank.

Blundell frowned. As a great man and a "blood" of the first water, it was rather cheek for Removeites to call him "old scout" or "old bean." He gave us a lofty look, which didn't make us very uneasy.

"I've got something to say to you kids," said Blundell.

"Us which?" asked Johnny, with some grimfulness."

"You kids. I believe the Fifth are supposed to be playing your lot at footer to-day, Wharton."

"I believe they are," assented Harry.

"Like your cheek to challenge us; but still, Form matches are good practice, and we

don't mind. But the fact is, I'm in a bit of a hole."

"True enough," I nodded. "I've often said the Fifth is an awful hole. These chaps have all heard me—haven't you, you men?"

"I wish I had a pound for every time I've heard you say it," grinned Johnny.

"The poundfulness would be terrific," said old Inky.

Blundell glared.

"I didn't come here for any fag cheek," he said. "You can keep your chin for fellows who like it. I don't. Look here, Wharton, I want you to do me a favour."

"Delighted," laughed Harry. "You've got such a fascinating way of asking favours, old scout."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Blundell breathed hard.

"I don't want to have to thrash you for cheeking a senior before the match, Wharton," he said. "I've told you before that you can keep your chin and talk sense. Look here, I want you to play Coker in your team this afternoon. Is it a go?"

" Wha-at ? "

We simply yelled. Coker of the Fifth is the biggest dummy who ever trod a footer ground—or anything else. He scores goals against his own side, mops up the referee when he likes, charges his men all over the place, and knows as much about footer as a warthog. And yet he thinks he is the best player at Greyfriars.

" Oh, my hat ! " gasped Harry. " Nunno ! I—I don't think it's a go, Blundell. In fact, I'm sure it isn't."

" The no-gofulness is preposterous, my esteemed Blundell."

" I'd take it as a favour if you kids could manage it," urged Blundell, a little more amiably. " It would be no end of help to me."

" But—but I don't understand. Why do you want us to play that crass dummy Coker?"

" Are you doubtful about winning, and want to make it a cert ? " I asked.

Blundell glared again.

" Nothing of the kind, you young ass."

" Then why—"

Blundell coloured up uncomfortably. He bit his lip.

" Well, look here," he said at length, " I can trust you fellows not to let it get about, because it's rather derogatory to a man's dignity. The fact is, Coker had a hamper from his Aunt Punch or Aunt Judy or somebody—"

We grinned. We knew all about Aunt Judy's hampers. They helped to make Coker popular in the Fifth.

" He stood a bit of a spread in the Fifth," explained Blundell uncomfortably. " Well, he's a born fool, of course—he doesn't realise what a chump he is—and—and the fact is, he wouldn't let me have a whack in his spread unless I promised to give him a show in this Form match."

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

We yelled.

" It was an awful cheek, of course," said Blundell, " but—but, as it was only a fag match, and this hamper was really a rattling good one—"

" You promised him a show. Ha, ha, ha ! " yelled Harry.

Blundell was pink.

" Well, yes ! " he admitted. " That's about the cut of it. And now—"

" And now you have the awful nerve to try to palm him off on us," snorted Johnny. " You can't get out of your word, so you think you can let him play in the Remove."

" Howling cheek ! " we cried indignantly.

" Wait a tick," exclaimed Blundell. " You don't quite get me. You know what Coker is. Anybody seeing Coker play would imagine he had been bribed by the other side."

" Ha, ha, ha ! "

" And so I've been wondering whether, after all, Coker might not be induced to play a fair game for us, instead of giving the game to your kids."

" Eh ? " we said, puzzled.

" Look at it sensibly," urged Blundell. " Suppose Coker plays for you and Vernon-Smith or Cherry plays for the Fifth."

" Wha-at ? "

" Catch me playing for the Fifth," I observed.

" Do wait a bit. I say, look at it sensibly. If Cherry plays for us, he will wear our colours, but he will really be playing against us. That is to say, he will be playing for the Remove, although he will line up with the Fifth like the rest of us."

We gasped helplessly.

" But what—what—"

" Half a minute. Coker will line up with the Remove as a Remove man. But he will really be playing for the Fifth—although he won't know that. You see, if Coker scores goals against his own side as usual, it won't do any harm, because he will really be playing for the Fifth."

" Oh, crikey ! "

" As we line up, the position will be that twelve of the Remove are playing ten of the Fifth, although Cherry will be in the Fifth Form line and wearing the Fifth Form colours. But that won't be the position really, because Coker, unknown to himself, will really be playing for us. He will think he is playing for the Remove, but really and truly he will be playing for the Fifth. See ? "

" Then we can charge Coker over and take the ball away from him, although he is wearing our colours ? "

"Exactly!" nodded Blundell.

"And—and we can pass the ball to Bob, although he is wearing the Fifth Form colours?"

"You've hit it."

"Oh, ye gods!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I'm blessed if I can see any other way of getting a fair game out of Coker, and it's too much of a handicap to us to play him in the ordinary way."

"That's your fault. You shouldn't scoff Aunt Judy's hampers."

"Coker has redeeming features," I grinned.

"I wish he had a few on the footer field," grunted Blundell. "Well, you kids, is it a go?"

"It's a go!" chortled Harry, and we nodded. "It's only a practice match, anyway, so there's no harm done. It will be the joke of the season."

"Good!" said Blundell, getting up. "I'll go and tell Coker—he'll need soothing before he agrees to play in your fag team. I'm glad you've agreed. In consideration of that, I won't lick you for your cheek——"

"What?"

"Although you deserve it. See you at two-thirty on Big Side. Don't be late."

And Blundell walked off, leaving us practically speechless.

Then we burst into laughter. Even if we did consider it cheek for Blundell to suggest his brain-wave, the Form match promised to provide us with no little fun.

SECOND SPASM

Sauce for the Gander!

BLUNDELL's novel scheme for making Coker play a good game for his side soon got about, and fellows all over Greyfriars announced their intention of watching the match.

It really was not such a bad idea. It was a little confusing, of course, to have a Remove man in the Fifth colours and a Fifth Form man with the Remove; but, as Blundell said, Coker, in playing for the Remove, was likely



"Look here," said Blundell, "I want you to play Coker in the Remove team this afternoon. Is it a go?" We simply yelled with laughter, for Coker is the biggest dummy that ever trod a football ground.

enough to play quite a fair game for the Fifth. Coker always played well for the other side. And as the other side would in reality be his own side, Coker might, for once, put up a good show.

We were all grinning as we went down to Big Side. I was wearing the blue and white stripes of the Fifth, while the rest of the Remove were in white shirts and blue shorts. We found the Fifth already in the changing-room.

The great Horace Coker was clad in a white

shirt and blue knickers like the Remove. He gave us a lofty look.

"I'm doing you kids a favour by playing for you this afternoon, and I don't want you to forget it," he said haughtily.

"You mean that you are doing the Fifth a favour?" queried Frank.

Coker's lip curled.

"I might as well tell you, right away, that I don't want any cheek or familiarity either on the field or off it," he said. "Because I'm playing for you fags it does not entitle you to speak to me as one of your own gang. I want to make that clear. Your position is one of respect and obedience."

"Oh, crumbs!"

"And there's another thing," went on Coker. "Who's the captain of your mob? You, I believe, Wharton?"

"Right on the wicket, ugly!" chortled Harry.

"Well, I want you to stand down this afternoon," said Coker, disdaining to heed Wharton's pet name. "If I am going to play for you, I must be captain. I insist on that."

"If you are going to play for us, of course you must be captain," nodded Harry.

"Good!"

"But as you are not going to play for us——"

"Eh?"

"And couldn't possibly play for a team of bunny rabbits——"

"What?"

"Not knowing what the verb 'to play' means, I hardly think you'll be captain, Coker," said Harry shaking his head.

"Haven't I just said I don't want any lip?" bawled Coker. "Am I captain or am I not?"

"Is he captain or is he not, you men?" asked Harry.

Nine voices replied at once:

"Not!"

And another voice added:

"The notfulness is terrific!"

"While you're in my team, you are under my orders, Coker," grinned Harry. "And the first order I give you is not to speak another word until the end of the match."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"The second order is: Look sharp and get ready. We're waiting to take the field, and we don't want to hang about all day waiting for a champion chump."

"Rather not!"

Coker looked quite dazed. He made a stride at Harry, but the junior held up his hand.

"One moment," snapped Wharton. "My third order is that thou shalt not touch thy captain in anger."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And we crowded out of the pavilion, leaving Coker trying to say eleven different things at once. If ever a man looked as if he wanted to touch his captain in anger, old Cockey was the man.

He had cooled down by the time he came out to join the Remove eleven. Gwynne was referee, and he blew a solo on his whistle and told us to line up.

"Come along, kid," said Blundell to me. "You are centre-half in our line, the same as Coker is centre-half in the Remove line."

"Right-ho!" I grinned.

I lined up with the Fifth, looking, as Johnny told me, like a pygmy amongst the pyramids. Horace Coker, in the Remove ranks, looked like a lighthouse standing up at sea.

A large crowd had gathered around the touchline, and they were all laughing.

"Play up, Coker!" bawled Hobson.

"Coker of the Remove!" chortled Skinner.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The whistle shrike—I mean, shrieked—and Wharton touched the ball to Penfold. Pen hung on to it for a moment and then passed it behind Blundell to me.

I was immediately surrounded by my striped "comrades," and Hilton barged me over while Price took the ball away. I sat up counting stars.

When I got my next view of the game—having wiped the mud off my face—I found that all the players were standing still and that the spectators were doubled up with laughter. Gwynne was waving the players back from the goal.

"Coker's going strong already," wept Bland near by. "I shall bust in a minute. Good old Coker!"

"What's happened?" I asked.

"Coker's handled the ball in the penalty area," sobbed Bland. "It's a penalty for the Fifth—in the first minute."

"Oh, my only aunt!"

The Removites, grinning, went behind the line. Blundell took the penalty, and drove the ball past Hazel in goal.

"Goal!" roared the crowd.

"One up to the Fifth—thanks to Coker!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Goal!" chirruped Hilton. "Good old Coker! I hope he handles the ball every five minutes."

The Remove fellows looked rather grim as they lined up. Of course, this was really only a rag, but it would not be nice to be beaten by about twelve goals to nil because of Coker.

They looked grimmer before the whistle went for half-time. Coker had done many wonderful and astonishing things.

He had scored twice—thanks to Johnny having given him the ball by mistaking him for a Removite. He had given away free kicks innumerable. He had charged over Smithy in the act of scoring a cert goal, and he had passed the ball to Tomlinson of the Fifth right on the Remove goal-line. Tomlinson merely had to touch it to send it in.

The Fifth, at half-time, were winning 5—0, thanks to Coker.

Harry looked a little rueful as we came off the field.

"Blundell knew what he was about when he swung Coker on me," said he. "Dash it all, I wish I hadn't agreed to it, as it happens. Of course, it's only a farce, but we don't want to be licked by goodness knows how many goals—even in a match like this."

"The fact is, old top," said Smithy.



No sooner did I receive the ball than I was immediately barged over by Hilton, while Price took the ball away. I sat up counting stars.

sucking a lemon, "you've let your leg be pulled, as usual. We simply can't tackle the Fifth with Coker on our backs, and we shall be laughed at up and down the school."

"What rot!" I exclaimed. "Everybody knows that this is only a silly rag."

"Rag or not, I don't like being whacked hollow in this way, and I say so plainly."

Harry looked uncomfortable.

"Well, there's nothing we can do now," he said.

"Isn't there?" I yelled. I had thought of a really brilliant idea. "Isn't there? Don't you believe it! If this match is a rag, we can rag the Fifth like they are ragging us. What's sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, you know."

"What do you mean, ass?"



MY WILL

By *Dick Penfold*

I HAVE a desire before I expire
To write out a bit of a will;
I live in the fear that I shan't last a year;
I am feeling exceedingly ill.
For Bolsover blacked both my eyes, and he whacked
Me too hard. He deserves to be bunked!
I go to my grave with a heart bold and brave,
In a year you will find me defunct.

I give and bequeath a new set of teeth
To Mr. Paul Pontifex Prout;
The rhythmical saw of his muscular jaw
Is wearing his other set out.
To Quelchy I leave a new cane; I believe
He won't take the thing as a joke;
While Bolsover, he will receive a split pea
And I hope that he'll eat it and choke.

Those fatheaded skates, my late study-mates,
Inherit my private effects;
It isn't a lot, but it's all I have got,
And so I pass on to the next.
I leave a large box of American chocs
To old Bunter. (He'll roar with delight!)
I'm sorry to state that the chocolates are ate,
But the box—as a box—is all right.

My footer boots I will wear till I die
And then raffle 'em twopence a round;
The uppers and soles are mostly in holes,
But the laces are perfectly sound.
My cricketing pads I shall leave to the lads
Of the team. And I bet I should chuckle
To see them decide how on earth they'll divide
The two pads without splitting a buckle.

To Toddy, the freak, I will leave all my Greek
Lexicons, paradigms, phrases;
And when I am gone he gets my Xenophon—
That soul-stirring bunk *Anabasis*.
My poems, of course, I shall leave with resource
In a place where, dear reader, you see 'em;
Eight hundred and ten brilliant works from my pen
I bequeath to the British Museum.

“Listen to me my pippins,” I chortled, and I explained my idea.

When I had finished, Wharton and Smithy were wiping their eyes.

“Good egg!” laughed Smithy. “That'll turn the match into a proper farce. I wonder if the Fifth will think it quite so funny in this half?”

“Ha, ha! I think not! Something seems to tell me,” chuckled Harry, “that we may win after all. Come on, my infants.”

Gwynne's whistle was calling us back into the field. We trooped out and the grinning spectators gave us a cheer.

“Play up, Coker!”

“On the ball, the Fifth!”

Blundell kicked off, and the ball travelled to Tomlinson. Coker obtained possession and booted it towards the Remove goal. Play kept at that end of the field for a few moments, while I dropped back towards the Fifth Form goal.

Presently Smithy got the ball and raced away down the touchline, with the players after him. He dropped the ball into a crowd in front of the Fifth Form goal, and then Gwynne suddenly blew his whistle.

The fact was, I had accidentally handled the ball in the penalty area.

Blundell came puffing up.

“What's the matter?” he panted.

“Penalty!” snapped Gwynne. “Your man handled the ball in the area.”

“But—but Cherry's a Remove man.”

“Rot! He's in your team, isn't he?”

“Ye-es, I suppose so, but—”

“Stand back,” snapped Gwynne.

Wharton took the penalty, and drove the ball into the net.

Five minutes later once again I happened to handle the ball—quite accidentally, of course—in the penalty area.

Wharton took the kick, and the score became 5—2.

Blundell's face was a study.

“Look here, Cherry,” he snapped. “What's this game?”

“Jiggered if I know,” I replied. “It looks something like footer, but it can't be that.”

“I thought perhaps you were under the impression that it was rugger,” remarked



As the ball passed by me Gwynne suddenly blew his whistle. The fact was I had handled, and it was a penalty for the Remove.

Blundell sarcastically. "Keep out of our penalty area in future, if you don't mind."

I shook my head.

"I must stop the opponents scoring," I said seriously.

He looked as if he would eat me.

The play went back to the Remove goal. I stood in the Fifth Form penalty area and waited. Presently Peter Todd got the ball and booted it hard up the field past the Fifth Form backs. The ball fell at my feet. I drove it into the goal.

"Off-side!" howled Blundell violently.

"How can he be off-side when he's your own man?" snapped Gwynne. "Talk sense. It's a goal—scored by your own man."

By this time the spectators were in hysterics, and when, in the next three minutes, I again managed to handle the ball in the area, they broke down.

We won that game. Even Coker could not play like I was playing. I managed to handle the ball nine times altogether, and nine penalties yielded nine goals. I stood

on the goal-line and booted the ball in from an "off-side" position eight times. I managed to get in the way of my own men and stop them defending their goal, as a result of which the Remove scored another four.

The result was: Fifth Form, 9; Remove, 21.

Not a bad game.

Blundell's face was a picture. He had never considered the fact that I could score for the Remove exactly how I liked, and never be off-side. He regretted his little scheme when he thought of that.

As for Coker, he got quite an ovation for his sterling game. The sobbing spectators gave him three rousing cheers. He put in three of the Fifth's goals and was the cause of the other six being scored.

Wingate was standing by, and Coker looked at him.

"After this," said Coker calmly, "I should think that even you would give me my chance in the first eleven."

But Wingate had no words to reply. He simply couldn't think of them.



Here is the truth (?), in original orthography, about Greyfriars' most celebrated character, William George Bunter—by one who knows him as well as he knows himself!

We take no responsibility for the truth or otherwise of the statements contained in this article. It reached us through Bunter, who said it was written by his uncle, Lord Bunter de Bunter. If that really is so, we can only say that the illustrious author must be the most original speller in the peerage!

My nephew, Billy, is, of course, the famous Billy Bunter, of Greyfriars Skool. Some people have been known to call him "infamous," but that merely proves they're jellus beasts!

Jellusy, to tell you the truth, is at the root of all the misunderstandings that eggsist about my nephew Billy. What else but jellusy could injuce fellows to call him fat? Admittedly, he's not skinny, like the rest of the beasts, but to describe his fine, manly figger as "fat" is the giddy limmit!

The same mite be said about the silly legend that he eats too much. It's all bosh! No healthy fellow can eggspect to live on less than ten good meals a day, and my nephew Billy makes a point of never eating more than a dozen. Why, then, sujjest that he gorges himself?

Some of the beasts will tell you my nephew Billy is untruthful. Perish the thort! Why, only last week, Quelchy (that's his Form-master) remarked to him: "Bunter, you're the worst liar I ever knew!" That shows he lacks any akkomplishments in that direction!

Then there's the question of his honnesty. Some rotters go as far as to say that no

tuck's safe while he's about. Beleeve me, deer reader, my nephew Billy scorns to touch tuck that duzzent belong to him; and even when he does, he whacks it out among his friends, if they happen to be about!

As to his much-advertised nervusness, all I can say is Billy's as brave as a lion! On the sellybrated occasion when the dormitory caught fire, he was the first to jump out of the winder to show the rest how safely they were holding the blanket down below!

By this time, deer reader, you'll have guessed that the idea of his being a dud at games is just another of the fairy-tales circulated by jellus beasts who are afraid of being outklassed by him. The fact is, he's the best all-round sportsman in the skool. Footbawl, kricket, swimming and boxing are all the same to him—he's a champion, all the time! If you don't believe me, ask him yourself!

Finally, to dispose of all misconceptions, let me tell you that he is a gentleman and aristokrat. The blue blud of the Bunter de Bunters, who came over just before the Conkeror, flows through his veins. At Bunter Court, his ancestral home, he lords it as his fourbears have lorded it before him for jennerations!

And now, deer reader, you know the truth, the hole truth, and nothing but the truth about my nephew Billy. Let those jellus beasts who have detracted from this noble fellow in the past, read, mark, and inwardly dijest. Perhaps they will now be silent and forever hold their piece!