

THE GASHOUSE GANG



JUST TO REMIND YA'LL,

this brings us to Game 4 of the 1934 World Series battle between the Cards and the Tigers. Man, oh, man. Game 4 did not go our way. Tex Carleton was scheduled to pitch that day. Folks called Carleton “The Third Dean” ‘cause he looked a lot like me ‘n’ Paul and all, but, fine fella that he was, he ain’t never been no Dean. We lost that matchup 10-4 and that weren’t the worst of it. In the fourth inning, that **pinch-hitter** Spud Davis stepped up to bat and nailed a single to right field. Everyone knew Davis was slow as a knock-kneed duckling and Ol’ Diz had plenty of speed to spare. Whiles Frankie Frisch was looking up and down the benches to find someone to run for Davis, I just went ahead and trotted on out there. I thought I’d get the job done. Frankie didn’t like it, but he figured “Well, Dizzy’s already out there ...” so I stayed.

I took my place on the field, bowed courteously to the gentlemanly governors present at the game and watched as Pepper Martin hit a grounder to the Tigers’ Charlie Gehringer who went right ahead and tossed that ball to Bill Rogell on second. Rogell tagged the base to get me out at second and then prepared to throw to first for the double play. ‘Cept the ball never made it to first.

He threw that darn thing straight into Ol’ Diz’s head.

They all says I laid there unconscious for quite a while after that. Out cold as a mackerel. The papers all wrote that “the throw that floored Dizzy Dean would have knocked down two elephants. It’s a wonder that the entire top of his head was not shot away at such close range.” Eventually, I was helped off the field to recover there in the dugout. But such a tragic play sapped all the energy from my Cardinals team, and we lost that game square away. Was a real hard loss for all of us, demoralizing in the worst kinda way.

History remembers that moment by giving

Mr. Frisch a bad name. Says he took a million-dollar asset and used him on a 10-cent job. Which is probably true, but heck, I wanted to run and so run I did. Broke up a double play with my head! It’s no matter anyhow. I went to the hospital straight away to get checked out by the team doctor.

When I returned, I told all them press people not to worry. The good doc x-rayed my head and found nothin’.



After all that hullabaloo Frisch was a tad apprehensive about starting Ol’ Diz for Game 5. But I told him, “give me the ball and I’ll go out there and get ‘em for ya!” Turns out it’s hard to go out there and get ‘em when it feels like a freight train done and gone ran over yer head. Guess that ball hit me harder then I thought it did. The Tigers won that game, with a score of 3-1.

The series was now 3-2 Tigers. We mighta been down, but we sure weren’t out.

That night some fool fans of Detroit camped outside of the Cardinals’ hotel rooms playing that song, “**Tiger Rag**,” over and over again just to keep our players awake. Darn tootin’ I was livid! Instead of getting’ all us Cardinals

players too tired though, they just went ahead and made us angry. And nobody could mess with a mad Cardinal ballplayer!

My brother Paul pitched Game 6 against Schoolboy Rowe, hurlin’ for the Tigers. It was a great game. The kind of old school hard-fought scrabble we ball players grew up thirstin’ for. Leo Durocher got three hits, and both teams sure did play top notch—all crisp throws, elegant catches and spectacular slides. My brother Paul went ahead and put Game 6 right there in the bag. We Cards won 4-3 that day.

But I tell’d ‘em all, they ain’t seen nothin’ yet.

Read more about Dizzy Dean and his fellow players in author Carolyn Mueller’s children’s book “Dizzy and the Gashouse Gang.”


She lives in St. Louis, MO.


Visit www.carolynelizabethmueller.com.

Illustrator Nick Hayes draws political cartoons for the Guardian and New Statesman newspapers and writes graphic novels. He lives in East London.



EXTRA INNINGS!

 Injuries are unfortunately all too common in sports. Look in the newspaper to find examples of articles or ads that help treat or prevent injuries.

 Sports is all about winning and losing. Reporters have to be creative with their word choices. How many synonyms of winning and losing can you find in today’s newspaper?

Learning Standards: I can use the newspaper to locate information. I can evaluate word choice.

POP UPS



PINCH-HITTER: A batter that substitutes for another batter.

“TIGER RAG:” A jazz song first recorded in 1917. It is one of the most recorded jazz songs of all time and it is often used as a sports fight song.