

**TACKLE AND QUARTER-  
BACK AND OTHER  
ATHLETIC STORIES**

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Tackle and Quarter-Back and Other Athletic Stories by Leslie W. Quirk

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**LESLIE W. QUIRK**

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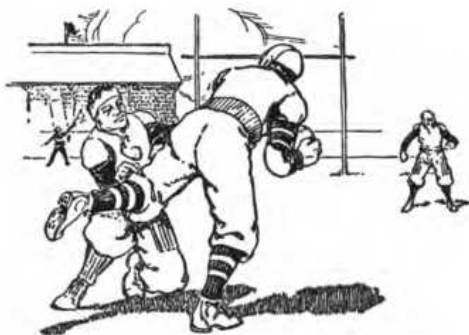
Jackson was fighting for the vengeance of victory.—Page 103

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# Tackle and Quarter-back

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By Leslie W. Quirk



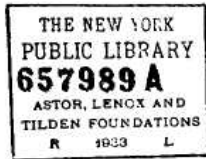
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## CHAPTER ONE

### OUT FOR THE ELEVEN

**O**N the first afternoon when big Jackson played tackle for the scrub eleven, the 'varsity found him as firm and unyielding as the Rock of Gibraltar. Play after play charged full upon him, only to stop as dead as if they had crashed impotently against an immovable object. Watching from the side lines, Coach Parker had already chanced upon the football sobriquet borrowed from history for the man—"Stonewall Jackson."



Now the position of left-tackle on the first eleven was a raw sore. One after another, six husky, but stupid, aspirants had rubbed it with salted incompetence; and Parker had writhed at the pain. But in this new Viking, blond and big and fearless, the coach saw the remedy. So the next afternoon found Jackson playing on the 'varsity team.

But he failed; failed dismally. His playing was listless, and, worst of all, brainless. Something—some stimulus, some incentive of the day before—had worn off, and left him a stolid hunk of bone and muscle. The body was still there, magnificent in its possibilities; but the spirit was missing.

The sore was unhealed. Reluctantly, Coach Parker admitted it to himself. "Yesterday was only a flash in the pan," he decided. "He's an in-and-outer; not 'varsity material."

Jackson, displaying no emotion whatever, was shifted back to the second eleven. Parker saw the little scrub quarter-back put his hand on the giant, and speak an encouraging word. He fancied that he detected the tackle straightening his shoulders and

setting his teeth hard; but even this did not prepare him for the sudden metamorphosis of the man. For, on the very next scrimmage, Jackson charged through the opposing 'varsity line as a bull might have galloped through a mammoth sheet of paper, and downed the man with the ball so violently that for some seconds he lay dazed where he had fallen.

Nor was it the spasmodic accident of pique and revenge. For ten long minutes Jackson tore the other line to shreds, stopped with disastrous precision the plays that cannonaded upon him, and wound up his exhibition with a thirty-yard elephantine run, apparently little retarded by the desperate tacklers hanging fly-like to his body and legs. Jackson had found himself again.

It took Coach Parker nearly a week to unravel the mystery; a week that left him with rasped nerves and an unenviable reputation of slave driving. There were days when Jackson was phenomenal; there were others when he would have disgraced a high school eleven. At length, after the squad had scrimmaged for hours at a time, solely that Parker might

study one candidate for linesman, it dawned upon the groping coach that certain combinations of players brought out the man's full ability. After that, it was only a step to the solution.

Jackson played his real game when working in conjunction with little Payson, substitute quarter-back. The boy weighed only one hundred and twenty pounds, and, although gritty and clever, had never been graded as of big-team caliber. Yet he possessed the ability to infuse the tackle with a fighting spirit which at once appalled and delighted the coach. The problem of filling the gap at left-tackle was solved—conditionally.

That night Parker called on Jackson. The player greeted him with refreshing modesty. He refused to talk about himself, but managed to worry the coach by declaring that he really had no ambition to make the eleven, and wasn't going to break his heart trying. He was out for practice, indeed, largely because—Here he hemmed awkwardly, and looked embarrassed.

"Well, Mr. Parker, it's this way," Jackson finally admitted. "I agreed to try with the squad because