

SHORT LENGTHS

A NEW METHOD TO CATCH BASE RUNNERS.

HUGH JENNINGS has a new one. The little leader of the Tigers, whose auburn thatch is familiar on many diamonds, is as versatile as a black face comedian doubling in brass. He broke up a time-honored custom by inventing a new scheme to catch a runner off a base.

Every fan knows the mode of ball teams in every city that has a club, when they set about to catch a runner between the bases. If a man is caught off second base, the pitcher, second baseman, shortstop, left fielder, third baseman, pitcher and catcher and sometimes the rest of the team gather around and by tossing the ball back and forth try to retire him. Sometimes he escapes and reaches third or gets back to second. This is the stereotyped, copyrighted method. It is, in other words, the scheme of baseball standpatters.

But not for Jennings. Let a base runner lead too far off second and the shortstop and pitcher will get the office to try for him. If they succeed in getting the ball between second and the runner, the latter's only hope is to head for third.

Naturally the third baseman hustles over to the bag. Also he makes sundry and divers motions with his hands to help the runner into a condition where he will believe the shortstop is about to throw the ball, instead, the latter sets sail for Mr. Runner without preliminaries. The runner, constantly expecting the ball to be thrown to third, cannot do his best, because he must be ready to stop and return toward second at any moment. But the shortstop unhindered by any such thought can run at full speed, which he does.

About the time the runner realizes the ball will not be thrown, he slides for the bag, only to be tagged by the

man behind him. The first time the Tigers used this trick in public, the shortstop slid into third with the runner, tagging him on the leg in time to retire him. The play made a big hit with the fans.

THE HIGHEST SALARIED MAN IN BASEBALL.

WHO is the highest salaried man in baseball?

Volumes have been written on this subject and there has been an abundance of discussion, pro and con—in point of absolute fact, most of it "con"—as to the identity of the lucky individual. So far as is known the real facts in the case have been carefully guarded from the public. But—

It is solemnly stated in New York that John McGraw, the popular and peppery leader of the Nationals, has annexed his John Hancock to a contract for a term of years, having as its mean proviso a salary of \$18,000. This is per year—also per-haps. Granting that the story of Jawn's yearly stipend has not been too greatly exaggerated, it is safe to assume that he is king pin of them all as far as salary goes.

Though manager of the haughty Giants, McGraw is by no means a giant himself, physically, I mean. He's a short, and more or less chubby individual, but when you see him strut up to the ump to protest a decision, you can readily believe that nature intended him for a giant if there did seem to be a shortage of material.

McGraw's close friends call him "Muggsy"—but not when they are too close to him. This fits the Gotham baseball czar like the proverbial paper on the wall, and needs no explanation as to why it was given him to carry through his diamond career. Muggsy is a clever baseball general, an excellent judge of players and a disciplinarian of the do-what-I-say-or-I'll-

knock-off-your-block type. And he's undoubtedly worth the \$18,000 per to the club stockholders, sometimes referred to as the "men behind." Only in Gotham they are ahead of the game financially rather than behind.

HOW TO BE CZAR OF THE DIAMOND.

BE boss of the diamond," says Silk O'Loughlin, famous American League arbitrator, whose name is a household necessity in most American homes.

"An umpire, like a player," says O'Loughlin, "must think in advance. He must know each man's peculiarities, his strength and weakness. He must so plan that he is in the most advantageous position to render instant decision upon every play and at the same time must not interfere with the play.

"He must plan what he will do, for instance, if when working behind the bat, with a runner on second, the batter hits the ball. With the two-umpire system he should hustle toward the base to decide a play should one be made at that station, his fellow umpire watching the opposite bag.

"He must study the delivery of every pitcher, gauge his curve ball and note the jump of the fast ball. He becomes, through experience, able to know in-

stinctively where a curve ball or fast ball will cross the plate or skim by it. I don't mean by this that an umpire can look at the ball as it comes to the plate and tell where it will go, but he can follow its flight with accuracy because he has learned the little tricks the ball thrown by each pitcher will perform.

"Running his own game does not mean surliness. It means the umpire is sent onto the field to represent the league, to decide plays and interpret the rules. He may not tolerate interference; he may not permit a player to 'show him up.' He must retain his dignity and not permit an argument.

"He should not make his decision too quick or he may have to change it. It isn't a good thing to have to change decisions, and earn a reputation for being premature.

"Ball players are human, and when they realize an umpire is stern, but just, they are less apt to kick over the traces even in the heat of a hotly contested game than if they have reason to believe they can gain anything by attempting to bullyrag. Of course umpires make mistakes, not being infallible, but on the whole their decisions are correct, as the players admit when off the field, although sometimes they find it hard to do so when the battle is raging."