



THE SMILING GENIUS OF HIGGINSPOORT, OHIO

## “Slim” Harry Sallee and His Marvelous Control

How the Elongated Twirler of the Cardinals Has Become  
One of the Greatest Pitchers in the National League

By M. V. B. LYONS

Harry Sallee has for several seasons been an interesting character in baseball. The tall St. Louis pitcher has gone on from year to year increasing in effectiveness, and is now one of the leading left-handers in the National League. His remarkable control of the ball and his coolness under fire are his strongest characteristics.

**S**INCE Harry Sallee broke into the national game there was never any doubt of his ability as a pitcher. His speed, to be sure, was not startling. There was nothing particularly brilliant in any of his talents, but he had a good curve, good change of pace, good if not startling speed, and above all a marvelous control which gave him at all times a

perfect mastery of the ball. The managers who viewed Sallee's capabilities with genuine admiration speedily saw that it was not the onslaught of opposing pitchers which would prove his undoing. It was rather natural carelessness on the part of the elongated pitcher himself.

When Sallee first broke into the big

show he was completely carried away by the glamour and excitement of a life to which he had never been accustomed. He found himself allied with the most popular of games in a position which brought him much notoriety and which kept his name in the limelight in the largest cities of the country. Many enthusiastic fans who always dog a player's footsteps, and by their very efforts to make things pleasant and agreeable for him, prove his undoing, were conspicuously evident in Sallee's case. And as a result of such like indiscretions his early career was marred by his failure to keep in proper training. It is distinctly to his credit that he has risen superior to these early lapses from the narrow path and has by his own persevering efforts, become one of the leading pitchers in the National League.

No one is more frank in discussing his early mistakes than Sallee himself. "I did used to drink a good deal, I will admit," he said to me once in his grave, sincere way. "But those times are over now. Many players have been foolish and I have had my share. But I am settled down now and have the ambition to pitch good ball for some years to come." And Sallee is certainly living up to his good resolutions.

The premier twirler of the Cardinal club was born at Higginsport, Ohio. Higginsport is a microscopic hamlet situated in a fertile farming section of the Ohio River Valley. In the Summer-time the town's population is five hundred—in the winter when Sallee returns from his victorious tour with the St. Louis Nationals, the population swells perceptibly to five hundred and one.

Sallee's good work has been with the St. Louis club. Bresnahan more than any other manager seemed best fitted to handle the attenuated twirler and his record while with that club has been in the main steady and effective. And what is more he has several seasons just as good or better ahead of him.

Sallee's most marked characteristic is his great height which looms up all the more conspicuously owing to his corresponding lack of breadth. Sallee sums up his physical condition in these words. "I am six feet three and a quarter inches tall and weigh 148 pounds. I never vary

an ounce summer or winter except when I drink beer. Everybody in the world who drinks beer increases his weight except me. If I should drink a little beer in the winter time every day for a week I would lose a pound."

Sallee's slender build has won for him the universal title of the "human string bean." I sat in the bleachers once at the Polo Grounds when Sallee was gracing the pitcher's box and heard an illuminating conversation on this subject between two fans, directly in front of me. "That guy can pitch all right," said one of these disciples of the National Game, "but his speed looks sick. He hasn't got any." "He's got it all right," said the other fan, "but he doesn't dare use it. He knows if he should uncork a swift one it would break him in two." But this was hardly fair to Sallee. True, he is not a speed pitcher, but he does have good speed and uses it, but his build is apparently unsuited to his strenuous task of pitching and his success in spite of this physical handicap is all the more remarkable.

Sallee's most conspicuous talents lie in his coolness under all sorts of conditions and in his marvelous control. He never gets rattled under any circumstances whatsoever. Whether it be the ninth inning with the game well in hand and two men out or whether the score be against him with three men on bases, he bobs them over the plate with the same easy, carefree, and confident manner. It is not so much a sign of his faith in his own ability, for Sallee is by no means egotistical, it is rather an innate poise and unruffled calm which refuses to be agitated by any outside influences.

Sallee's control is one of his greatest talents. Left handers as a rule are more inclined to be wild than right handers. Sallee is a left hander and his control is all the more remarkable on that account. Speaking of his own great ability in this respect, Sallee says: "I believe most of my success as a pitcher has been due to control. When I was a youngster I used to practice almost all the time throwing stones at a mark and such like sports. No doubt these stunts had some effect on my later success along this line. I have always practiced control in my pitching and believe it is one of the most important things a pitcher can have. Any-



**HOW “SLIM” SALLEE PUTS ONE OVER**

one who looks through the lists can see a good many pitchers who had all the talents to be successful but lost out through lack of control. It makes no difference how much speed a man has or what curves he has mastered. These things do him no good if he can't get the ball over the plate. Wildness is the chief fault a pitcher has to guard against."

"Outside of control which came naturally to me and which I have done all I could to cultivate, I have been successful mainly as a curve pitcher. Good curves combined with good control will carry a pitcher a long ways. I have never tried to use the spitball. This style of delivery needs a man who is rather heavy and speedy. It requires a good deal of strength. A successful spitball pitcher uses an overhand motion and puts much strength behind the effort. A pitcher who uses the spitball successfully must practice all the time. He is seldom good for anything else."

"The hardest club for me to defeat has been Pittsburg. I can see no sign of Wagner's going back although he may be slowing up a little in the legs. It is surprising how many heavy men are fast base runners. Wagner does not look fast but he has been one of the greatest base stealers in the game. And Bescher who I think is the greatest of them all, is a heavy man."

"I believe a pitcher should keep busy in the winter so as to be always in the best form. I have lived at Higgsport, Ohio, all my life and spend my winters there. I have no special plans for the future when I get through with baseball, but intend to have a farm of my own to retire to. My favorite sport outside of baseball has always been hunting."

Last season Sallee took part in 48 games, a greater number than appears in the record of any other National League twirler save only Benton of Cincinnati. Several of these games do not count

either for or against him in the final figures, being in the nature of three round, no decision affairs. However, he is held accountable for seventeen defeats while this liability is nearly balanced by sixteen victories. .485 is Sallee's final average, a most creditable one taking into consideration the poor form of the St. Louis club throughout most of the season. According to John Heydler's admirable new system of basing a pitcher's

effectiveness on the number of earned runs scored on his delivery Sallee's rating is much higher, his name adorning the list eight places below the leader. Although the record of Bob Harmons tops his slightly in percentage of victories Sallee was all through the season the most dependable of St. Louis National twirlers and one of the very leading left handers in the major league circuits.

