



# The Stroller

## An unforgettable character

By W.W. EDGAR

It is not unusual these days when the Stroller sits down to lunch with a group of service club brothers that he is asked questions that, oftentimes, are out of the ordinary.

Perhaps it is because he has been strolling along the river of printer's ink for 50 years, years that they make a man the target to start a friendly discussion.

So it wasn't surprising the other day when one of the service club brothers turned to him and said, "You must have met a lot of colorful figures in your strolls. Which of them was the most unusual character?"

"You might be surprised," the Stroller answered, "if I told you that the most unusual character he ever encountered never wore a boxing glove, never hit or caught a baseball, kicked a football, sat in a speedboat or drove a car in an automobile race."

ALL HEADS turned to him, possibly thinking he was going to tell them of a politician down in the Pennsylvania Dutch country, inasmuch as the coming election is on almost everybody's mind these days. Instead they sat there somewhat shocked when The Stroller confided that the most colorful character he ever encountered was a gate crasher named "One-Eye" Connelly, last of a breed that is now extinct.

His name does not ring any bells with the modern generation of sports followers. But a half century ago, no big sports extravaganza was complete without recording the threats and feats of the little chap who warned all promoters and security guards that he would be on hand and would enter the portals of the arena without going through the formality of purchasing a ticket.

"One-Eye" was nothing to look at. He was just several notches above being a hobo—at least if judged by his manner of dress. He wore a black patch over one eye and a cap with the peak twisted around so it covered one of his ears. And he always needed a shave.

But he was a character made all the more famous when the late Damon Runyan, a great short story writer of another era, used him as one of his leading characters in a prize novel.

"ONE-EYE delighted in tantalizing the big time sports promoters by claiming they couldn't keep him outside the gates on the night or day of their promotions. And he never failed to work his way inside without the necessary ticket."

It was the late Tex Rickard, who came out of the west to build up the fight game, who first battled "One-Eye." He had the entire outside of the

arena in Toledo, Ohio, guarded for the heavyweight championship fight on the hot afternoon when Jack Dempsey took the title from Jess Willard.

For days before the fight, "One-

Eye" was on hand. He never missed a chance to brag about his ability as a gate crasher, claiming that he never had paid to get into a sports event and never would.



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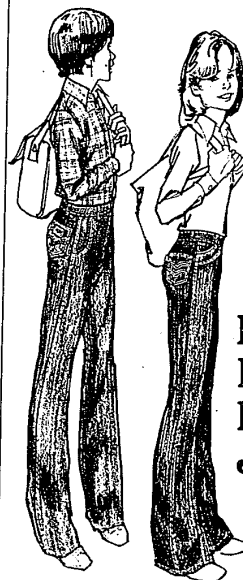
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