

## AN EXCITING GAME

By RAMON YULO \*

OUR PROVINCE is divided into five athletic units. Once each year we have a provincial athletic meet which is held in one of the important towns of the province, usually during the town fiesta. Each athletic unit is represented in this meet by the champion teams in various athletic games and events. There is always great rivalry among the various teams of the different units to see which will get to play at the annual provincial meet.

We're in the third athletic unit of our province which comprises four different towns. There is stiff competition among the teams of these towns, for each team wishes to become a champion team of our unit.

To decide upon the champion teams we have a unit meet. Several years ago the baseball championship had narrowed down to two teams—ours and that of a neighboring town. The championship game was to be played in the afternoon of the second day of the meet.

Before it was time for the champ game to start, of course I was with our boys. I could see that they were not at ease. They knew that their opponents were just as good players as they were—perhaps better—and so the game would be hard fought.

At one-thirty in the afternoon the game began. It was a five-inning game. From the very beginning each player was determined to do his best. There was

intense interest among the friends of the two teams.

At the end of the fourth inning the score stood 3 to 8 in our favor. Our players and all the rooters for our team felt



*"You're out!" shouted the umpire.*

jubilant.

The fifth inning began. Then a strange thing happened. Whether it was due to over-confidence or nervousness, I do not know, but suddenly our pitcher seemed to lose control of his throws. Everybody noticed it.

Things began to look bad for us. Through "balls" our opponents scored three "homes" with nobody out and the bases full. That made the score 6 to 8. The score was still in our favor, but we

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began to be scared. If our opponents would make three more home runs, the score would be 9 to 8 and our team would be the losers.

Our pitcher continued to throw wild. The batters of our opposing team just stood at the batter's box waiting for "balls," while their companions were wildly cheering. Our players and rooters became terrified. If we lost, it meant that we had no representation in the baseball games at the provincial athletic meet.

I looked at our pitcher. "Don't give up, son," I shouted. "We haven't lost the game yet." I saw him grit his teeth. Then he paused a moment and looked around, calmly and deliberately. I hoped he was getting hold of himself. Sure enough, he was.

Immediately I saw that once more our pitcher had got control of his throws. Good throws came—one after the other in rapid succession. A batter of our opponent's team was struck out. The second "out" came when a ball, hit by the batter, was caught by the pitcher. Two men were out and the bases were full. Our confidence was restored. If we could just get one more of their men "out," it meant the end for our opponents.

The interest was tremendous. There was a breathless stillness. Our pitcher waited a few seconds; then—up went his arm and he sent the ball flying. A good throw! The man at the bat bunted the ball which went right to the pitcher. The ball was swifter than the runner to the first base. "You're out!" shouted the umpire. We had won!

Then pandemonium turned loose. Our players and rooters were wild with joy. They swarmed out to the field, and for half an hour they shouted for joy,

and danced and sang. Our opponents were good losers and congratulated our boys. And, good sports that they were, when our team played at the provincial meet, these former opponents were there, cheering and yelling for our team. They had the true athletic spirit.

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#### QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Did you ever play baseball? Indoor baseball?
2. Do you know all the rules of the game?
3. Have you ever gone to an athletic meet?
4. Did a team from your school play? Did your team win? Or lose?
5. Are you interested in athletic sports? Do you take part in them?
6. What is the true athletic spirit? Do you have it?
7. Do you like to "play fair"? What is meant by that?
8. Why are athletic sports important?
9. Is it possible to play athletic games in the wrong way? How?
10. Make a list of all the athletic sports you can think of. Draw one line under the name of those you like best. Two lines under those you play. A red line under those in which you are an outstanding player.
11. Can you make a list of benefits which players in athletic games receive?
12. Do you know of any unsatisfactory results? If so, make a list of them.
13. Is it desirable to have keen competition among teams?
14. Why should teams "play fair"?
15. What is the most exciting baseball game which you ever saw? Can you tell about it? Or write about it?