



SAVAGE VOLLEYING GAME, plus explosive serve, may carry handsome Bob to the top

## Another Fabulous Falkenburg

BY R. MAGRUDER DOBIE

He was just "Jinx's brother" for a long time, but Bob is blazing his own trail these days — with a cannonball serve

A FEW years ago, a tall, handsome kid from Hollywood, who looked more like a movie star than a tennis player, arrived in New York for the national singles championships. An ardent movie fan, he made his way to Broadway, took in one double feature after another. When the last midnight show was over, he found himself standing in the rain in Times Square, with no place to go but the tennis club. He asked a newsboy for directions to Forest Hills.

"Say, ain't you Bob Falkenburg?" asked the newsboy.

Bob has never forgotten that night. He had just played in a tournament with his left arm (broken in a horseback accident) in a cast, and newspapers had used his picture. It was the first time he had ever been identified as anything but "Jinx's brother."

Jinx Falkenburg is now settled in New York with a husband and a radio show. But Bob, at the tender age of 21, is still footloose. He and his 19-year-old Brazilian bride have been honeymooning in Europe while he

played the Continental tournament circuit.

Bob was seeded eighth at Wimbledon, played into the quarter-final round. No one expected him to win, but no one was more exciting to the crowds. They gladly paid to see this six-foot-three youngster with the long arms and legs lean into a cannonball serve, storm the net for sharp volleys, and execute an overhead smash that sent the ball bouncing into the grandstands. Falkenburg needs sounder ground strokes if he is to succeed Jack Kramer on the tennis throne. But for the time being he is satisfied to be the next champion. Life is full and exciting.

### Intercollegiate Champ

Nor so many months ago, Bob was just another student at the University of Southern California, his chief claim to fame being that he played tennis with Errol Flynn, Paulette Goddard, Walter Pidgeon, Jack Warner and Mickey Rooney. Then, in 1946, he won the intercollegiate championship, came east for the fashionable grass-court tournaments, and in the national singles advanced to the semi-finals before being eliminated by Jack Kramer, national champ.

Shortly thereafter, Falkenburg was invited to Mexico for the Pan-American matches. After winning the doubles with Frank Parker and interviewing a bullfighter for Jinx's radio

program, he continued on to Rio de Janeiro. There he met Señorita Lou Machado, whose father owns a large radio station.

It was not love at first sight. In the local tournament, in which he was the main attraction, Bob wrenched his back, had to default. The Brazilians accused him of quitting because of lack of interest in the \$200 watch offered as first prize. This was bunk. Bob not only wanted the watch, but he was anxious to show Señorita Machado how tennis should be played. At first she shared the feelings of her fellow countrymen. But Bob is a persuasive talker. Some months later she followed him to Hollywood and then to New York where they announced their engagement. Bob celebrated by going to the finals of the indoor championship. They were married in Rio.

Bob is quite aware that tennis is responsi-

ble for the exciting international world in which he now moves. What surprises him is that he, of all the tennis-playing Falkenburgs, should be the one that's having the fun.

His mother introduced the sport into the family. While her husband was on an engineering job in Brazil, she won the Brazilian championship. The family seldom remained long in one spot. Jinx was born in Spain, Tom in Chile, Bob in New York City. As soon as they could lift a tennis racket the kids were let loose on a court. When the family finally settled in Hollywood, Jinx was the first to show promise. As a junior, she ranked third in the state and came within one point of beating Pauline Betz. But talent scouts persuaded her there was more future in movies.

### Studio Winner

WHEN they were still in their early teens, Tom and Bob got bit parts in the movie, "Kidnapped." In the finals of the studio tennis tournament, they endangered their acting careers by defeating Errol Flynn and his doubles partner.

Movie stars soon found it advantageous to have one of the Falkenburgs for a partner, particularly when the side bets were heavy.

Bob also frequently teamed up with his father, a big man with a terrific serve and no respect for a tennis ball, in father-and-son tournaments. Sport writers remarked that with a stronger serve and net game, the boy might go places.

Bob was eighth in the 1946 national ranking, but experts regard him as one of the most promising of the younger players. He still plays as if the object is to knock the cover off the ball. He has the most powerful serve in tennis and a terrific overhead smash. An Argentine player who got in the way of one of Bob's smashes was bruised for weeks.

Sidney Wood, one of the great tennis stylists, has coached Bob for several years, says: "As soon as he concentrates on improving his ground strokes so he doesn't have to improvise, he'll be hard to beat."

### Easy Touch

FALKENBURG, who has beaten most of the top players at one time or another, is open to suggestions. But he points out that he won the intercollegiate title, the national doubles (with Don McNeill in 1944) and went to the semi-finals of the national singles with nothing but his explosive serve and net game. Johnny Doeg went to the top with no more equipment.

Bob would make a popular champion. He has never had much money, but among the players is known as an easy touch for a loan. He never goes in for displays of temperament, has a weakness for midnight poker sessions. He also has a tendency to loaf through the easy matches, with the result that he has won and lost more five-set matches than any other ranking player. He's at his best when the going is toughest.

His friend Jack Kramer was recently a guest on Jinx's radio program. In response to a question, Kramer predicted that Falkenburg would be the next champion — provided he perfected his back-court game.

"Why not tell that to Bob?" Jinx said.

"And cut my own throat?" Kramer replied. "No sir. I like being on top." *The End*



BOB AND LOU. He lost a match — and won a bride