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The Bench Warmer a poem by Coach Rick Mays

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The Bench Warmer

The man on the bench is the man formed
He's not the star but he's the key.
Without his aid and help each day
I doubt if there would be a play
Ever run by a team on "big game" day.

He holds the dummy and shows the way
The other team runs that certain play.
When not being blocked, he's chasing punts;
Or shagging fly balls, and fielding bunts;
Or a hundred and one other useful stunts.

He's always the "skins" against the "shirts":
And the night of the game he sits and hurts.
He helps with equipment, and picks up the balls,
Sets up the hurdles, and takes the falls,
But is always ready when some coach calls.

He's not on the sports page every time;
When a "dollar" is waiting, he's the "dime".
He comes to the banquet with a little prayer,
Hoping this year the "letter" is there,
As he squirms wistfully in his chair.

And he suffers a little along with his coach,
As the names are read and no approach
Is made to him, there is a wrench
In his heart. But his teeth will clench
As he says "next year", this man on the bench.

What happens to all the men like these,
Who seem all elbows, thumbs and knees?
Don't feel sorry for their frustrations,
They are the men who head corporations,
And sit on the councils of great nations.

They learn the value of raw sheer grit,
The determination that won't say quit,
To face the gun with just a knife,
They learn how to make a fight in life.

To the man on the bench I give my hand
With the greatest respect, "cause he's my man.
Please don't worry, he'll go far
Be it jet propulsion or motor car,
Somewhere in life, he will be a star.

By Rick Mays, Football Coach

Southwestern at Memphis

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