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[Sports (Swimming)]

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Remarks

Forms to be Filled out for Each Interview

CHICAGO FOLKSTUFF

FORM A Circumstances of Interview Sports Lore

FOLKLORE

CHICAGO

No. Words 570

May 26 1939

STATE Illinois

NAME OF WORKER Sam Ross

ADDRESS 713 Rush Street

DATE April

SUBJECT Sports (swimming)

1. Date and time of interview -

2. Place of interview -

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3. Name and address of informant -

Self

4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant. -

None

5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you

6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

1

JOHNY WEISMULLER'S STORY

I don't know how I did it. I smashed out there and at the end of the hundred I know I had pulled my cork. At the seventh length the little man in the green hat with the hammer in his hand started to work on me. Every time I hit the end of the pool the little man pounded my head until by the time I hit the ninth length my eyeballs were hanging out of my head. I don't know how I got through the rest. But when I popped up at the end and saw the look on Bach's (Bachrach, coach) face I know something happened. Then I'm told I did 2: 08.3 for the 220, cracking my own world's record. Can you imagine that! And in the condition I was in.

SPORTSMANSHIP

This took place at a national A.A.U. championship in 1931. There was a breastroker named Tommy Blankenberg who had won the 220 breaststroke championship the year before because there was nobody of topnotch caliber to compete against. He was defending his title. A week before this meet at the national intercollegiates Austin Clapp had beaten Buster Crabble in the 440, after Crabble had been conceded the race by the experts. All these men were from Los Angeles. Just before the breaststroke race was

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about to begin, Crabble approached Blankenberg and gave him a rib. "I hope you win, Tommy," said Crabble. Tommy knew that he didn't have a chance. "You hope I win, you bastard," said Tommy, "like I hoped you'd win the 440 against Clapp".

2

HOW IT FEELS TO BE AN OLD MAN

This happened at the national A.A.U. indoor championships in Chicago in 1928. Weismuller was defending his backstroke title in addition to the 100 and 220 yard freestyle. In the big meets the officials work the preliminary heats in this manner; a sure winner is put in each heat; the first four winners and the second fastest time qualify for the finals. Some kid named Gorge Kojac who was in his last year high school, an unknown, was put in Weismuller's heat. He had traveled sitting up for 20 hours to compete in this meet. He got in that pool and kicked water in Weismuller's face all the way in. Weismuller qualified for the finals with the second fastest time. That night the house was packed. Everybody was very tense. Who was this kid? Where'd he come from? He had upset the dope and broke the world's record in the afternoon. Nobody had a doubt but that Weismuller would crack the kid up in the finals. The keen competition has a way of doing that to a newcomer. The race started and at the end of the hundred Kojac and Weismuller were tied. They had to go under the record for the hundred to stay together. On the sixth lap, Weismuller cracked completely and Kojac kept right on going, butchering the water and the former champ. He went under the record he had established that afternoon. Weismuller swam in third. After the event, in the shower room, Norman Ross, whom Weismuller had displaced previously, slapped Weismuller on the back and said, "How's it feel to be an old man?"

3

JUST A CASE OF NERVES

There was a guy at school who was the fastest swimmer I had ever seen outside of Weismuller, in practice. He could do world's record time for the 50, 100, and 220 crawl.

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When he got in a dual meet with another university nobody could come near him. In the conference championship he tied with his team mate, who was three seconds behind him always, for first. At the national intercollegiates he couldn't even qualify for the finals, while his team mate got third. At the national A.A.U. championships he could hardly move. The trouble was: he'd get so nervous that his muscles would tie up and he couldn't get coordinated.

GAG

At the national outdoor championships of platform diving, there was a former diver sitting in the stands and he called a coach over and yelled, "Hey, I got a kid for you who dives off the ninety foot platform into a damp rag." "I'll take him," the coach said, "if he uses the damp rag to dry himself."

TALL STORY

"Yeah," the coach of the New York A. C. said, "there was all that money riding on the fourth race and would you believe it, the four horse parley came through." We all look at Joe peculiarly. Finally our coach said, "Say, Joe, that must have paid off in telephone numbers."

4

MODESTY

"Say. I hear you're good. A champ, or something."

"Sure, you ought to see me do the under water high hurdles and low hurdles. I'm terrific. And the pole vault. I do that under water pole vault for a world's record every time."

AT LIFE GUARD SCHOOL

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There are the good swimmers and bad swimmers. The bad swimmers are usually the tough guys or football players who work against their coaches' orders because the coaches are afraid the boys will soften up for the coming season. Watching the boat tests are always fun. You do it against time. You're supposed to push your boat out, hop in, row like hell to the man in the water about 300 yards out, drop your anchor, drop your oars back in the boat, then jump for the man, drag him on to the boat, pull up anchor and row back to shore. Usually a man forgets to drop his anchor and the boat drifts away when he jumps for the rescue; or he forgets to throw his oars in and he loses an oar during the rescue; or he forgets to pick up his anchor before going back to shore. Watching these in always good for a laugh.