

AQUATIC HAWAII IN THE OLYMPIC GAMES

By Edwin North McClellan

The tumult over the Olympic Games of 1952 has faded away. At Helsinki, Finland, swimmers of Hawaii surpassed the performances of the swimmers of any of the forty-eight States; but I rate our 1952-Hawaiian-Team behind 1920 and 1924 in that order. The ten World-Champions from Hawaii, who have won first-place Olympic gold-medals, form a very exclusive and distinguished group—Duke Paoa Kahanamoku, Warren Kealoha, Pua Kealoha (relay), Mariechen Wehselau (relay), Clarence "Buster" Crabbe, Bill Smith, Thelma Kalama (relay), Ford Konno, Yoshinobu Oyakawa, and Bill Woolsey (relay). All these ten swimmers, as well as others of Hawaii who have scored points in the Olympics, have been nominated as members of the Hawaiian-Aquatic-Hall-of-Fame. In the *Forecast*, October, 1950, I wrote that George "Dad" Center "is among the 'first ten in the Hawaiian-Hall-of-Fame,'" and that Dad "shares with Duke Kahanamoku the honor of being the Outrigger Canoe Club's 'most honored member.'" The Outrigger Canoe Club, its aquatic athletes, coaches and other members, have performed a fine share of the work as Hawaii achieved its Olympic victories; but the Club and members have much important work in the coming four years. Hawaii looks forward with hope to Melbourne of 1956 and backward to Athens in 1896 and all the other Olympic Games between, for inspiration.

1896—ATHENS, GREECE

The Republic of Hawaii under President Sanford Ballard Dole (later President of the Outrigger Canoe Club) sent no aquatic athletes to the initial modern Olympiad at Athens in 1896, although Hawaii possibly had potential point-winners in Kimokeo, Kapule and others including, reportedly, Chris Wiedemann on the Coast. Hawaii was voluntarily annexed to the USA in 1898.

1900—PARIS, FRANCE

Dan Renear, Kimokeo, Kuaiwa, Pua, James McCandless and other swimmers, were available in Hawaii but no effort was made by the Territory of Hawaii to send them to Paris in 1900.

1904—ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

American swimmers and divers, among them Charles M. Daniels, finally won gold-medals in the Olympic Games; but Hawaiian swimmers Ernest Kopke, Kimokeo, Tom Hustace, Will Lyle and others did not compete at St. Louis. Dan Renear and George Freeth (diver) were reported on the Coast.

1906—ATHENS, GREECE

(SPECIAL AND UNOFFICIAL)

These Special Olympic Games were staged to boost interest in the London Games of 1908. Hawaii sent no swimmers or divers to Athens even though Duke Paoa Kahanamoku (not yet sixteen), Ernest Kopke, Tom Hustace, Lawrence Cunha, Carl Oss, Kerr, James Gir-

vin, Tinker, W. Cooper, Willie Roth, George Crozier, W. L. Lyle, Jess Woods, Pete Baron, George Cooke, Will Dixon, and diver George Freeth, might have scored points for Uncle Sam.

1908—LONDON, ENGLAND

No aquatic athletes of Hawaii competed in these Olympics; but Hawaii was awakening. The Outrigger Canoe Club was created on May 1, 1908, and many of its members had much to do with stirring up Olympic interest. Swim-relay races in the harbor between the Myrtles and the Healanis produced name-swimmers. After the Healanis Team had won a relay race from the Myrtle team, a second was held across the Naval Slip the Harbor on July 10, 1909. The winning Myrtle Team was: Thompson, Paty, Padekin, Davis, Willie Roth and Dad

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Center. The defeated Healani swimmers were: Carl Oss, Lawrence Cunha, William H. D. King, Robert K. Fuller, Joe Kamakau and Duke Paoa Kahana-moku, not yet 19. (Picture in *Forecast*, September, 1952, p. 12). Dad Center started the final leg with quite a lead over Duke but barely won from the swift-swimming DPK. "This is the first time that it really dawned on me that I could swim really fast," Duke told me not long ago. "Dad just beat me by a 'touch' and it was then that they started talking about me being a real swimmer." More than once Dad Center has told me that "we found Duke in this relay race. Duke won from me by a 'touch' and we knew then that we had a champion swimmer." (*Forecast*, October, 1950, p. 3).

MORE SIGNS POINT TO A TEAM FOR 1912

The first realistic move toward getting Hawaiian swimmers in the Olympic Games was organizing, under leadership of Outrigger Canoe Club members, the "Hawaiian Association of the AAU," in the late Spring of 1911 (*Forecast*, August, 1952). Shortly after this the *Hui Nalu* was formally organized by E. K. "Dude" Miller (President and Captain) and William H. D. King (Secretary-Treasurer). The *Hui Nalu* immediately joined the AAU making its members eligible for a proposed first AAU Swimming Meet. The *Hui Nalu*, at a meeting on August 4, 1911, elected "Dude" Miller, Bill King, and R. W. Foster as delegates to the AAU.

Admission-Day, August 12, 1911 was the date of the first AAU Swimming Meet, in Honolulu Harbor at the Alakea slip. Guy H. Tuttle (Secretary of the OCC) was President of the AAU at this time (*Forecast*, August, 1950, p. 6; August, 1952). The OCC planned to enter contestants in this First AAU Meet but discovered that their swimming-members had entered under other colors. Quite chagrined were OCC members E. F. Melanphy, Watson Ballentyne, H. Chapman and others. Duke Kahanamoku (*Hui Nalu*) won the 50, 100, and 220 yard events. Vincent Genoves (*Hui Nalu*) was victorious in the 440, 880 yard, and mile races. Lawrence Cunha (Healani) finished second in two events
(Continued on Page 16)

OLYMPIC GAMES

(Continued from Page 5)

and second to Duke in the final lap of the relay. Dad Center (Myrtle) was second in the 220. George Freeth (Healani) won the fancy-diving (202 points) from Robert K. Fuller (Healani), 198 points. Fuller also won the Plunge-for-Distance. "Duke Kahanamoku was known to be a fast sprinter," reported the *Advertiser*; "but not many people thought that the youth was a world-beater." World-records were claimed for Duke in the 50 and 100 yard times but they were not allowed. "The course was surveyed" on August 14, 1911 and along the wharf, commented the *Advertiser*, it was "found to be one and one-sixteenth inches short." And so, Duke Kahanamoku's name was in world headlines.

The first swimming-team of Hawaii to invade the Mainland was the two-man *Hui Nalu* team of Duke Kahanamoku and Vince Genoves. Funds were raised to send them. They departed from Honolulu early in 1912, accompanied by Lew Henderson and "Dude" Miller. Duke and Vince swam at several places. Genoves did not make out so well and he, Henderson and Miller returned, leaving Duke under the very efficient coaching of my old friend George Kistler, swimming Coach of the University of Pennsylvania at Philadelphia (*Forecast*, August, 1950, p. 6).

1912—STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Duke was selected a member of the American Olympic Swimming Team by the Committee which omitted the name of Charles M. Daniels, Olympic winner of 1904 and 1908. At Stockholm, Duke Kahanamoku broke the world's record for the 100-meter freestyle setting it at 1:3.4. Duke swam as a member of the second-place 800-meter relay team. On his return to Honolulu, Hawaii presented Duke with a house and lot in Wai-kiki (*Forecast*, August, 1950).

1916—SCHEDULED FOR BERLIN, GERMANY—CANCELLED

The First World War caused a cancellation of the 1916 Olympics. This was a great disappointment to swimmers and divers of Hawaii such as: Duke Kahanamoku, George "Pordgy" Cunha, John Kelii, Frank "Stubby" Kruger, Harold

Kruger, John Kealoha (Jr.), Clarence Lane, Lukela Kaupiko, Richard Holstein, George "Tough Bill" Keaweamahi; divers Robert K. Fuller, St. Clair Tait, Lorrin Potter Thurston, Karl Krebs; plunge-for-distance C. Dudley Pratt; and women-swimmers Josephine Hopkins, Lucille M. Legros, Helen M. A. Rosa and Bernica Lane.

1920—ANTWERP, BELGIUM

Dad Center, as Manager and Coach, had a powerful group of swimmers at the Olympic tryouts. Among them were: Duke Kahanamoku, Warren and Pua Kealoha, William W. "Wild Bill" Harris (Jr.), Ludy Langer, John Kelii, Harold H. "Stubby" Kruger, H. Fred Kahele (U.S. Navy), J. K. Gilman (U.S. Navy) and Helen Moses (chaperoned by her mother). Before leaving Honolulu in June, 1920, the Outrigger Canoe Club presented Dad Center (who was President of the AAU) with a gold watch. An AP dispatch of July 16, 1920 (published in the *Advertiser*) reported that among other Americans, Duke Kahanamoku, Pua and Warren Kealoha, Bill Harris, Ludy Langer, "Stubby" Kruger, Fred Kahele, and Helen Moses had been chosen to represent the United States at Antwerp. George (Dad) Center "became head-man of the Olympic Team," wrote Red McQueen of the *Advertiser* (*Forecast*, October, 1950, p. 5; August, 1950, pp. 10-11). The American Team sailed on the SS *Princess Matoika*. Duke Kahanamoku finished first and established a new world record in the 100-meter free style; Pua Kealoha was second and Bill Harris third. Warren Kealoha won the 100-meter backstroke. Duke and Pua Kealoha were members of the winning American 800-meter relay team. Fred Kahele finished fourth in the 400-meter freestyle and fourth in the 1,500-meter freestyle. This 1920 Hawaiian Team was the best we ever sent to the Olympics. The Honolulu Chamber of Commerce decorated each member of the returning team with a gold medal (*Hawaiian Annual*, 1921).

1924—PARIS, FRANCE

D. L. "Poupou" Conkling was Manager of the Hawaiian Swimming Team that was sent to the Olympic tryouts on the Mainland. The American Olympic

Committee selected Duke Paoa Kahana-moku, Samuel Alapai Kahanamoku, Pua and Warren Kealoha, Bill Kirschbaum, Charlie Pung, Henry Luning and Mariechen Wehselau as members of the American Team. Mr. Conkling, Mrs. E. Fuldard-Leo, Gay Harris, David Piikoi Kahanamoku, Dick Gartley and Stubby Kruger accompanied the team to Paris, which sailed on the *SS America* (*Star-Bulletin*, July 3, 1924; *Advertiser*, July 20, 1924). Warren Kealoha won the 100-meter backstroke in 1:13.2. Mariechen was a member of the victorious 400-meter relay team and second in the 100-meter freestyle. Duke finished second to Johnny Weissmuller (in the 100-meter freestyle) who set a new world record of 59 seconds. Finishing third was Samuel Alapai Kahanamoku. William Kirschbaum was third in the 200-meter breast-stroke. The 1924 Olympics saw the second-best team sent out by Hawaii being excelled only by 1920.

1928—AMSTERDAM, HOLLAND

Dad Center was manager and coach of the Hawaiian contingent to the Olympic tryouts on the Mainland. Duke Kahanamoku (38 years) did not try for the team—he was in movies. Mariechen Wehselau and Lily Bowmer May and others failed to make the Big Team. The American Team sailed on the *SS President Roosevelt*. Clarence "Buster" Crabbe finished third in both the 400-meter and 1,500-meter freestyle. That's all!

1932—LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Buster Crabbe, Duke Kahanamoku (42 years), Manuella and Maiolo Kalili, Johnny Wood, and others of Hawaii, tried for the American Olympic Team. Duke finished third in his 100-meter freestyle heat and failed to make the team. Clarence "Buster" Crabbe was victor in the only swimming-race won by America, taking the gold-medal in the 400-meter freestyle in 4:48.4. Buster also was fifth in the 1,500-meter freestyle. Manuella Kalili finished fourth in the 100-meter freestyle. As Duke-the-Magnificent came to the end of a brilliant aquatic trail we think that even a life-size statue of pure-gold erected on the Beach at Waikiki would not completely express the appreciation of Hawaii for the Bronze Duke

of-Waikiki and his achievements in almost every sport.

1936—BERLIN, GERMANY AND HITLER—HAWAII ABSENT

Adolf Hitler opened the Olympic Winter Games in a terrific blizzard. No aquatic athlete of Hawaii made the Olympic Team. Richard Cooke (Jr.), of Yale University, lost his chance to represent Hawaii at Berlin when the Olympic officials, not having time to hold final trials in the 800-meter freestyle, announced that Cooke and two other swimmers would be left behind (*Advertiser*, July 15, 1936).

1940—TOKYO, JAPAN; THEN HELSINKI, FINLAND—CANCELLED

The 1940 Olympic Games were cancelled by the Second World War. Pearl Harbor came on Black-Sunday, December 7, 1941. Deeply disappointed by the cancellation were: Kiyoshi (Keo) Nakama, Takashi Hirose, Jose Balmores, Carlos Rivas, Takashi Nakama, Ben Castor, James Tanaka, Barney Pung, Pete Powlison, Fred Brandt, B. Neunzig, Art Rutherford (Diver), and Olga Clarke, Fujiko Katsutani, Lulu Kea, T. Takeyama, Midge Garnsey, Yvonne Hussey, Mary Ann Hawkins, Mitsuko Higuchi and Coach Soichi Sakamoto.

1944—CANCELLED

The Second World War was raging. Many swimmers and divers, including Bill Smith and Kiyoshi (Keo) Nakama, were disappointed in their Olympic hopes for Hawaii.

1948—LONDON, ENGLAND

Coaches Soichi Sakamoto and Yoshito Sagawa took their charges to the Olympic tryouts. Jose Balmores, Halo Hirose, Bunny Nakama, Charles Oda, Pete Powlison, Robert Kumagai, Robert Kang, Herman Kobayashi, Godfrey Kang and Evelyn Kawamoto failed to make the American Olympic Team of which Bob Kiputh was head coach. Bill Smith and Thelma Kalama upheld the honor of Hawaii at London. Bill Smith acquired a gold-medal by winning the 400-meter freestyle in 4:41 a new Olympic record, and Bill was a member of the winning American 800-meter relay team that created a new world record of 8:46. Thelma Kalama shared in the victory of the

victory of the American 400-meter relay team that established a new Olympic record of 4:29.2. Coach Soichi Sakamoto was present at these London Olympics as a spectator.

1952—HELSINKI, FINLAND

Ford Konno won the 1,500-meter and set a new Olympic record of 18:30. Yoshinobu Oyakawa took first-place in the 100-meter backstroke in 1:5.4. Bill Woolsey and Ford Konno were members of the victorious USA team in the 800-meter relay which set a new Olympic record of 8:31.1. Ford Konno finished second in the 400-meter freestyle. Evelyn Kawamoto was third in the 400-meter freestyle and a member of the 400-meter relay team that finished third. Dick Cleveland was shut-out in the semi-finals of the 100-meter freestyle. Coach Yoshito Sagawa returned to Hawaii after the Mainland trials. Coach Soichi Sakamoto accompanied the Hawaiian swimmers to Helsinki. The work of both these splendid coaches was of great help to Hawaii and to Head-Coach Matt Mann. This 1952 Olympic contingent from Hawaii was the third-best that Hawaii has sent to the Olympics being excelled only by 1920 and 1924 in that order.

1956—MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

Let us all hope that a Third World War will not cause a cancellation of the 1956 Olympic Games at Melbourne. We certainly would enjoy reading of Hawaiian yachtsmen, motor-boatmen, surf-boarders, outriggerites, but especially divers, preparing to compete at Melbourne. We need a dive-coach and a fifty-meter swim-pool in the OCC or Hotel Grounds. An appropriate slogan of the OCC could be—"A Diver from Hawaii for Melbourne in 1956!" In 1912 Denmark won the "four-oared INrigger" race so why not an Olympic OUTrigger canoe race at Melbourne in 1956 with entries from Hawaii, California, Philippines, Australia and Mid-Pacific. They do have Canadian-canoe and *kayak* (Es-kimo canoe) races on the Olympic Program.

Now is not the time for Hawaii to forget but rather to start preparing for the Olympic Games at Melbourne, Australia in 1956.

More Surf 'n Sand

Jimmy Mann had a birthday last month. While having his daily lomi lomi on the beach by King he fell asleep and was awakened by the beach gang headed by Splash Lyons singing "Happy birthday to you." The awakening gave him such a start that Earl had to do the lomi all over again.

The group from the San Francisco Stock Exchange were given thrilling canoe rides thru the courtesy of Gay Harris. They think Hawaiian investments fine—but canoe riding better.

Our good member, citizen and friend K. C. Leebrick just returned from a trip to Washington where he delivered the annual report of the Trust Territory to the United Nations. "K.C." also took time out to visit his children in New York. He also gained a few lbs. but still looks fit. Welcome home, Karl.

Bob Crockett and Mrs. C. have arrived home after an extended trip to South America and the mainland. You may remember Bob's letter which appeared in an early number of the *Forecast*. He told us of the Waikiki Club at Lima and other interesting stories. Aloha to you both.

Alaska, Japan, Korea—and then a dip at Waikiki—General Lem Shepherd took time out Oct. 2nd.

Sir Frank Beaurepaire visited his old Friend "Dad" Center for three days in September on his way back down under to Melbourne, Australia. He was head timer at the Olympics in Finland and brings the Olympics to Australia in 1956. Frank is an old friend of the OCC and mighty welcome.

Jack Sturrock, a great yachtsman who captained the Aussie in the Dragon class of yachts in the games for Australia also visited us during September. A fine sportsman and a grand fellow, he represents the best from the land of the kangaroo.