Has Sent Hundreds of 'Em Away Without Once Giving The Triple Shot Recall

His Name Is W. A. 'Knute' Cottrell and He Had Retired With Record of 632 Perfect Swimming Starts: Used To Be a Diver; Gives His Rules on Getting Perfect Starts

By MIKE JAY



It is but right that Hawaii should have the best swimming race starter in the world! Hawaii simply had to have him because Hawaii has had and still has the best swimmers in the world and in order to let the best swimmers in the world do their very best, only the best swimming race starter possible can be allowed to work. The best swimming race starter has been working here, and it is because his work has been so wonderful that he has escaped the usual attention attracted by a starter. The miracle starter is W. A. "Knute" Cottrell, and the reason that he has suddenly attracted attention is because he has definitely retired from the business and the next swimming meet will see another man on the job. But in the years which he has been starter "Knute" Cottrell has hung up a record of 632 consecutive starts without once firing the three shots that signify "no race" and recall the swimmers to the starting platform.

The starter of swimming races must be "on the job" and "onto his job." If his swimmers fail into the water several times before he's come exhausted from climbing back out and the race so far as they are concerned, is lost. What is more, swimmers who have been held at too high a tension mentally records after several times falling into the water.

And when you have high strung temperamental world champions on the starting platform, all keyed up to "beat the gun," you have a real job on your hands. Cottrell does not believe it just try starting a race sometime if the opportunity presents itself. On the track the runners can be recalled easily without much loss of stamina, but after a swimmer had climbed out of the water two or three times from trying to beat the gun he has little chance of breaking the record, and so the job of a good starter is first of all to keep them from falling in.

Cottrell gives some of his pointers on starting as follows:

Pointers

"First I try to relieve the nervousness and tension in both the swimmers and myself. Even when I was scared to death I bluffed myself out of it and tried to do the same for the swimmers; tried to make them feel that they were assured of a good start if they only obeyed orders. One trouble with swimmers is that they want to be sure to get away on time. It isn't necessarily that they want to beat the gun, but they sure do not want to be beaten at the start by some other competitor. That, I believe, sums up the reason of false starts. To get away from it I tried talking to the swimmers in a conversational tone about the length of the swim, number of turns, how to go straight, and then the commands usually came snappy enough to get them all together. Sometimes one of them leaned over a little too far and then I waited until he regained his balance or fell in.

"Coordination between the eye and the brain is supposed to be something I have practised quite a lot during the 10 years and over that I have had occasion to carry a weapon. It was also taught us in the training camp, and due to that I have seldom felt flustered enough to pull the trigger before I was ready to be before I thought the swimmers were in a proper position to get a good start.

Best Start

"I maintain, some authorities to the contrary, that when a swimmer is in a low crouch on the starting platform at the starting gun is fired he does not necessarily get a better start than the swimmer who has not the crouch. There is a reason: The low crouching starter is all tensed up and when on the platform tends to make him go and when the gun is fired there is on instant of complete muscular relaxation prior to his securing another lower position for the full outward swing of the arms, a break. In other words, in his start, wherein the swimmer who is slightly more erect will have the advantage in a higher, flatter dive, enabling him to travel relatively further in his spring.

"Starting rules in swimming do not specify the amount of time between commands. I usually give a little longer time between 'Get' and 'Set' than between 'Set' and the gun.

"On the whole, securing the confidence of the swimmers means a lot in getting them away together."

Career

Now for a little history about "Knute." First of all, his full name is William Austin Cottrell, and "Knute" is only a nickname. He was born in Honolulu in 1880, and went to the public academy and at Louis college.

At Punahou he did his first swimming under water. He couldn't swim on top of the water and used to dive from the high board before he learned to swim above water. As a boy he was pushed off the top of a pile driver and then and there lost his nerve for high diving. Nevertheless, he entered the high diving events for the Hui Nalu years ago, and on the night of the meet forced himself to try all the difficult dives. He managed to make a number of seconds, but never got a championship.

He pulled for nine years in winning canoes for the Hui Nalus and Outrigger clubs. He is one of the three original founders of the Hui Nalu which came into being about 1908. He was president of the old Waikiki baseball league.

For a time he was life guard at Waikiki and during that period managed to save plenty of lives. He has a record of seven life savings in one day.

Trainer

He trained the first set of Hui Nalu swimmers who won every event in that meet. He conditioned Ted Cann, Herbert Vollmer, Perry McGilvray and Norman Ross in their first appearance here. In the case of Ross he changed the star middle distance man's body work and reduced the century time three-fifths of a second in one week's time.

He also trained Ruth Stacker, Josephine Hopkins, Gerd Hiorth and many others. He was quite a water polo star and played on the Hui Nalu team with Archie Robertson, Duke Kahanamoku, Jack Watlington and George Freuth.

He has done some diving, his limit being about 45 feet and he is also somewhat of a glassbox fisherman.

He taught the Y. W. C. A. classes gratis and assisted Ruth Stacker in her classes at Palama Settlement when swimming was first started at that institution. He helped to condition the Hawaiian team of swimmers which cleaned up in San Francisco in 1915.

And now he is in the real estate business, connected with W. L. Hardy and out of aquatics for all time.

Cottrell has seen Duke Kahanamoku come up from the ranks to championship and he is one of his most ardent backers of the Hawaiian sprint star.

"Outside of that I know that Duke, when feeling fit, can make the 100 in :48," is one of his favorite sayings.

TO ENTER LEAGUE

Nathaniel L. Kahn, captain of the Department Headquarters basketball team, is organizing a aggregation which will enter the local basketball league when it gets under way. They will go into training in the middle of next month and will play a number of pre-season games with other teams.

The Fort De Russy football team will start practice for the coming season on Wednesday, the directin of Lieut R. A. Erickson.

CLARENCE LANE IS RETURNING TO SWIM GAME!

Will Make First Appearance Here Next Week Since He Left For Coast in 1918

Old-time swimming fans will get a thrill Thursday night, the first night of the "Y" swimming meet when Clarence Lane swims in the 50 yards open, Hawaiian championship. This will be Lane's first public appearance in local waters since he left here five years ago for the mainind.

The entries for the men's open events are as follows:

220 Yards, Men's Open, September 1 —Jay Harris, O.; A. E. Minvielle, Jr., O.; H. Darnell, H. M., and W. Kealoha, H.

100 Yards Backstroke, Men's Open, September 1—Warren Kealoha, H. M.; Henry Luning, H. M.; Charles Pung, H. M., and Guy Harris, O.

50 Yards Open, Hawaiian Championship, August 30—Clarence Lane, H. M.; Warren Kealoha, H. M.; Charles Pung, H. M.; Robert Kealoha, H. M.; Pua Kealoha, H. M.; Kelii Kanoa, H. M.; Jay Harris, O.; A. E. Minvielle, Jr., O., and Paul Wells, M. C.

220 Yards, Boys' Under 18, Open, August 30—Charles Pung, H. M.; William Mokuau, H. M.; Robert Kaupuni, H. M.; F. Reader, O., and B. Burbank, O.

Men's Springboard Diving, Open (Hawaiian Championship), September 1—James Foley, H. M. (Ft. S.); Harold Sutton, Sch.; William Jones, H. M.; C. Makinney, O.; B. Burbank, O.; Kent L. W. Call, Jr., K.; Paul Wells, M. C.; Russell Appler, M. C., and Jas. J. Sweeney, R.

