

SPORT BILLY INTERVIEWS THE SUPERSTARS



MEET: OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST SWIMMER JOHN NABER

Sport Billy, the official mascot of many international sports federations and a popular worldwide symbol of fun and fair play in all sports, recently interviewed swimmer John Naber, winner of four Gold Medals at the 1976 Olympics in Montreal.

Sport Billy also was the official mascot for the first World Cup held during 1979 for the Federation Internationale de Natation Amateur, the world governing body for swimming, synchronized swimming, diving and water polo.

Sport Billy: John, swimming is, by and large, a sport for the individual. When you were at the Olympics, was it every person for themselves?

John: On the contrary, in all the years I've been swimming I've never seen such a close-knit team. Of course, everyone was vying for a Gold



Medal—we all want to win. But there was a real sense of team togetherness. We weren't competing against each other because we represented the United States. The freestylers, for example, would cheer on the breaststrokers and everyone would root for the medley participants.

Sport Billy: Which brings me to ask, why spend so many years of arduous, grueling training in a sport that offers so few financial rewards?

John: I started swimming at a relatively late age—I was a freshman at Woodside High School (Woodside, California is a suburb of San Francisco). I realized I'd never be a millionaire swimming hundreds of laps each day, but it didn't matter. I swam because I loved the sport. It wasn't easy of course. When I trained for the '76 Olympics I worked out four hours a day, six days a week, 11 months a year. I averaged about 10 miles a day.

Sport Billy: And has it been worth it?

John: Definitely. Swimming has provided me with the biggest thrills of my life—winning the four Gold Medals (100 and 200 meter backstroke and the 400 and 800 meter freestyle medley) at Montreal and breaking my first American record in the 200 yard backstroke as a senior in high school.

Sport Billy: How do you think the men's and women's swim team will fare in Moscow this summer?

John: In 1976 the men's team gave up only one gold, one silver and five bronze medals. Our only threat were the East Germans. We had a great coach in Jim Counsellman, from the University of Indiana. Last summer Jim became the oldest person (age 58) to ever successfully swim the English Channel. His stamina rubbed off on us at Montreal. The women's team in '76 won one gold and garnered 20 percent of the total medals. In Moscow this summer I'm predicting the men's team will win about half of the total medals. The women will improve and also win 50 percent of the medals.

Sport Billy: John, winning in any sport is obviously the ultimate goal. But you sometimes hear about parents who drive and push their children at an early age to become champions. What advice would you give to aspiring Olympic swimmers?

John: First of all, it's wrong for anyone to be pushed into anything, especially swimming, which can be a real "me" sport. You must love the sport and if you're dead set on becoming a swimmer, you must work hard and set goals according to your potential. If you swim a 54.2 in the 100 meter freestyle, for example, try and follow it up with a 55.5 the next time around. And you can't rest on your laurels. Don't spend 20 minutes thinking about your breast-stroke—you must get in the water and practice.

Sport Billy: What kind of diet do you recommend?

John: I've never really followed any diet. Everything in moderation is the best example to follow. If your body craves protein, eat some meat, preferably lean. If it needs carbohydrates, eat lots of whole grain food products. But try and stay away from "junk" foods—they're "empty" calories with no nutritional value.

Sport Billy: Four years and four Gold Medals later, what are your plans now?

John: I'll be the color commentator for all the swimming events at this summer's Olympics in Moscow. I'm also working for Speedo Swim Manufacturers, Ampex and Minute-Maid and make a lot of public appearances at high schools and colleges, talking about swimming and sportsmanship. You can be an Olympian and good sportsman!

NEWS

"With Norman Rockwell dead, the crown of most popular and best-loved American artist seems to be passing to Edna Hibel," writes the *Chicago Tribune*.

The value of her paintings, lithographs and plates bought by collectors in 1979 was nearly \$10 million, and the demand for her artwork continues to increase.

Miss Hibel, 63, paints characters and peaceful scenes which seem to have a universal appeal. Miss Hibel says "the essences that I have been trying to capture are those spiritual qualities in life that I value most highly."

The American-born artist's latest international exhibit, "A Celebration of Life," was arranged for Mainau Island in Lake Constance, Germany. The island is owned by an admirer of Miss Hibel's work, Count Lennart Bernadotte.

Miss Hibel is the only living American woman artist to have a museum devoted entirely to her work—the Hibel Museum in Palm Beach, Florida.

Little Tar Heel League Champs

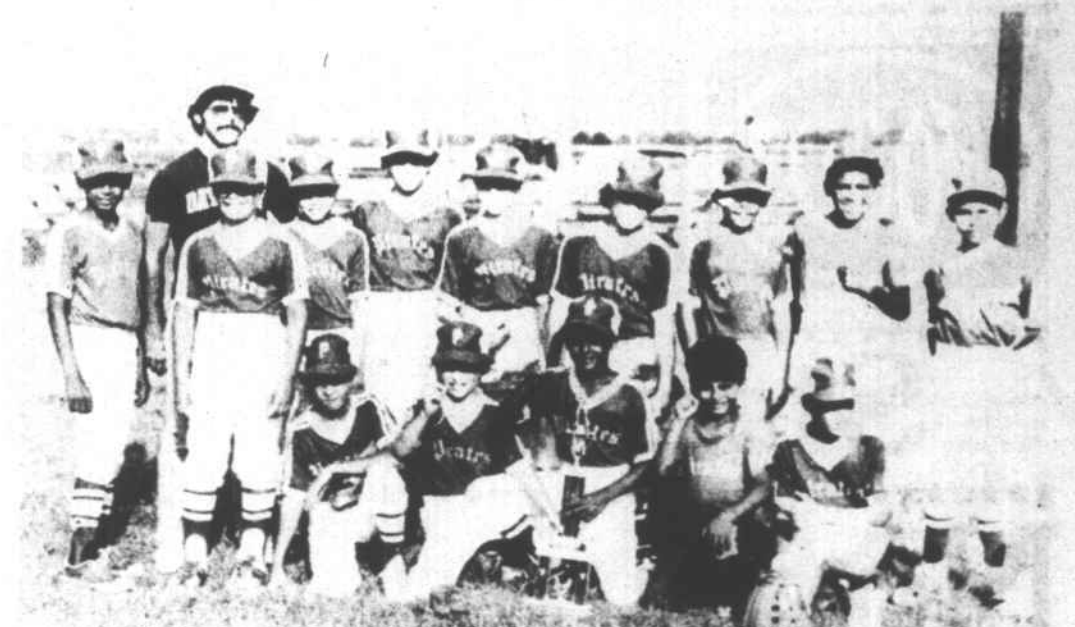
This year's crop of Little Tar Heel League teams in Pembroke were "one of the best in many years," according to Tommy Lowry, director of the

Pembroke Recreation Department. There were seven teams in the league, including the Yankees, Union Elementary, Phillies, Twins, Union Chapel,

Cardinals and Deep Branch. Mr. Lowry added that he would like to thank all the parents who helped support their teams and the league.



The Yankees were regular season champions with a record of 12-1. Coaches were Mr. Alonzo Oxendine and Mr. Lacy Jacobs.



Union Pirates finished second with a 10-3 regular season mark. Coaches were Jeff Maynor and Michael Godwin.



The Phillies finished fourth in the regular season with a 6-4 record but came back to win the tournament. Coaches were Mr. Wade Hunt and Mr. Virgil Brooks.



Runner up in the Tournament finished the regular season with a 7-5 record. Coaches were Mr. Larry Morgand and Mr. Earl Demery.

(BRUCE BARTON PHOTOS)

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