



RESOURCE

A UNIQUE LOOK AT B. C.'S CHAMPIONS OF SPORTS

Prepared by the B. C. Sports Hall of Fame

Every member of the B. C. Sports Hall of Fame has done something special to merit the honours bestowed on him or her. The athletes, the builders and the administrators have all won in one way or another. However, like a great scientist or artist it hasn't been just victory on the field. More importantly it has been a victory in the mind. In other words, these members of the Hall of Fame fought and won their real victories in their minds and hearts before the first play was made or the first ball was served. The stories in the Hall of Fame are not so much about sports but rather about people who engaged in sports.

Enjoy these special quotations from BC Sports Hall of Famers showing how before victory there is always a will to win. Or, as Baron Pierre de Coubertin, founder of the modern Olympics, so aptly put it: "The important thing in life is not the triumph, but the struggle."



"Even as I sat there I was planning for next year's competition, I never considered giving up." Karen Magnussen was watching the 1969 world figure skating championships from a wheelchair when she said that. She had stress fractures in both legs. In 1973 Karen Magnussen won the world championships.

"Tournament golf is more psychological and emotional than physical." You can say that about most sports but particularly golf. Stan Leonard applied this principal better than any other B. C. golfer in winning three major PGA titles. He also played in the prestigious Masters 10 times.

"I knew we were going to be a pretty good pair. We seemed to fit well together because we were about equal strength." There are so many intangibles that go into making up a winning team that you can't put them all down on paper. Suffice it to say that when it's right it works. For Roger Jackson and George Hungerford it was right as the pair took a rowing gold in the 1964 Olympics.

"That's the way we used to play it on the pond." Satisfaction is pure and simple as Pete Mahovich so aptly put it following the memorable game between the Soviet Union and Montreal Canadians last year.



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“Oh I was glad to get out of it all.” Because world-class athletics places so many demands on athletes, when retirement comes it’s almost a relief. Such was the case with Percy Williams, who won two gold medals in the sprints at the 1928 Olympics.



“And Roger Bannister with those long, smooth strides, Bannister is striding beautifully ... I feel this is going to be Bannister’s race.” The old cliché says when you’re hot, you’re hot. You can sometimes sense when something great is going to happen. This radio announcer did in the summer of 1954 when Roger Bannister won the Miracle Mile.

“If men will not be gentlemanly in their play, it is our place to encourage them to games that may be played by gentlemen in a manly way, and show them that science is superior to brute force.” The initial victory in sport is won in the mind. Dr. John Naismith was no exception. He invented basketball.

“The Russians are brilliant skaters and they’re fast. If we are going to keep up with them we’ll have to be equally quick on our skates.” To beat an opponent is first to know him. That’s how Ernie McLean approached his game against Moscow Selects. His New Westminster Bruins upset the visitors and was the only team to do so in the Soviet club’s seven-game tour of North America in 1976.



“I would have to eat everything I could get my hands on ... one day I gained seven pounds.” Doug Hepburn wanted to be the greatest weightlifter in the world. When he first got this notion in his head he weighed 145 pounds. When he won the world title in 1953 in Stockholm he was a granite-like 255 pounds.

“I never had to be told that wine, women and song could ruin a boxer, because I believed that wine, women and song could ruin anyone.” Dedication to the point of self-denial often measures the difference between the great and the greatest. In his day boxer Jimmy McLarnin was “the greatest” as he pounded his way to two world welterweight titles.

“I had to work my butt off every year, it’s as simple as that.” Talent counts for a lot in sports but desire counts even more. Norm Fieldgate had the latter in abundance and that’s why the ex B. C. Lion is in the Hall of Fame.



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“But I think it was about the announcer’s fourth ‘has to win’ that something snapped inside me. ‘What does he mean’ I said to myself. ‘I don’t HAVE to win anything. It isn’t the end of the world if I lose.’ And I relaxed. A great marvelous calm came over me.”
These were Nancy Green’s thoughts as she stood in the starters gate on the final race of the season she first took the World Cup. Before the starter said go, she’d already won the race.



Enough said.