

The family that swims together...

by SCOTT NEWTON

Surely Dick and Peggie Hodge must be the proverbial "little league" parents, driving their kids to succeed.

After all Damon, now 9, was the overall age group (8 and under) Oregon state champion, in both long and short course competition.

Ian, now 11, consistently finished in the top six in different events in his age group (10 and under this past season), again in state competition.

"Sometimes there are things I'd rather do with my friends but I have to go to swim practice," admits Ian.

"There are probably parents who think that we're pushing our kids, although no one has ever said that," Peggie said.

"Most people are surprised, in fact most people look at us in disbelief, when we say Damon only swims three days a week."

Many parents with kids near the ages of Damon and Ian take their youngsters to practice five days a week, according to Dick.

"We believe there is more to life than swimming," he said.

"They want to swim, but they go to workouts because their parents tell them too," adds Peggie.

"To make 'em go, say, twice a day, every day, I think that's wrong. But three days a week? No, I don't think that's wrong. I think that's good for them."

Dick believes the discipline of a regular schedule is important, and adds, "As far as muscle development, I would rather see the boys swimming on a regular basis than, for example, lifting weights."

When the Hodges do something, it seems, they do it all the way.

Peggie and Dick used to ski competitively. As a family, they've competed in regattas, having belonged to a sailing club. They also have done some barrel racing and other kinds of similar competitions.

Their rural home near Roslyn Lake allows them to keep six Arabian and quarter horses, and two ponies.

But swimming, the latest family fad, may turn out to be more than that.

Dick and Peggie competed in the 1982 National Masters Long Course

Swimming Championships at Mt. Hood Community College last weekend.

Over 900 competed, and to see older people in that good of physical condition has made an impression on the Hodges.

"When you see someone out there in their mid-80s, swimming a 1500—which is close to a mile—in competition, you'd better believe it encourages you."

"I've heard comments, some people were saying, 'Gee, in another 40 years I may look like that.' And I said, 'You may hope you look like that.'"

He added, "These people work at it. They really do."

Dick has been competing in masters events for about three years, and Peggie has been competing about a year.

At the national championships Peggie finished seventh in the 200 breast, setting a personal record of 4:00.91. She set another personal record in the 100 breast, and finished ninth.

Damon had to correct his mom on her time in the 100 breast. It was 1:51.41, he pointed out.

On top of that Peggie was one of the 12 swimmers in the state to compete on an Oregon relay. The "C" relay team was seeded eighth but finished sixth.

Though Dick praised the accomplishments, Peggie said, "I'm honest. I'm not a great swimmer. I placed in the meet because the hot dog swimmers were not swimming in the events I competed in."

MHCC, of course, has the facility for a good meet. On top of that, the meet was "extremely well run," according to Peggie.

Mike Popovich, meet director and aquatic director at MHCC, "was responsible," said Peggie. "He did a very good job."

Earl Walter, president of the masters organization, was also credited with contributing to the success of the meet.

All 50 states were represented, as well as Australia, Canada, England, Japan, France, New Zealand, Venezuela and Switzerland.

"It was really exciting to meet these people from all over the country," Dick said.

Oregon, by the way, won the meet.

The officiating was "world caliber," Dick said, pointing out that dozens of records were set and that times are recorded to the hundredths of a second.

"It's really a tremendous thing," Dick said of masters swimming.

Dick, who competed for a year on the Benson Polytechnic High School swim team, has even convinced his parents to take up swimming.

Unlike jogging, "Swimming is something that's kind of easy," Dick said, "because if you can swim one lap, that's something."

Dick, Peggie and Ian will be participants in the annual Mid-Columbia Cross Channel Swim on Labor Day, which is sponsored by the Hood River County Chamber of Commerce.

Dick and Peggie made the swim last year, and are doing it again to give Ian the opportunity. Although Damon could also complete the swim, reportedly the sponsors don't want the participants to be too young.

It's not unusual to hear the Hodges talk about English Channel swims, with Ian passing along the latest.

"I want to go to the Olympics and break records," Damon said at one point. When Peggie asked if it'd be worth practicing twice a day, every day, Damon said, "Maybe for a week."

Asked what he thinks about as he prepares to fire off the starting blocks in a meet, Damon said, "Sometimes you have to pace yourself."

Ian laughed, and told about a time when Damon started out a little too fast in the 200 free. Dick points out it was the first time Damon competed at that distance.

Asked the question again, Damon said he thinks about "getting to the other end as quick as I can, breaking records."

Dick is the owner of Pioneer Insulation, and though times are slow he has been finding work.

Peggie has a hard time staying out of the water for that long. She works part time at MHCC teaching preschool children to swim.

"It's something she believes in. 'I didn't learn to swim until I was a teen-ager. Therefore I know the trauma of learning to swim when you're a semi-adult,'" she said.



Damon, Dick, Peggie and Ian Hodge

Damon learned to swim before he could walk, and Ian started at the same time he was learning to walk.

"I really believe that little bitty kids should learn to swim," Peggie said.

One problem Dick and Peggie face when working out is the lack of available time at the Sandy Swim Center. They often work out at MHCC.

They claim they've checked the hours of adult lap swim at every pool in East County, and reportedly Sandy is the only one with only a half an hour offered.

"It's absurd," Peggie said.

It seems "to me like they're trying to discourage adult lap swim in Sandy," Dick said.

By the time one warms up, a half an hour isn't long enough to get in a good workout, according to Dick.

Currently the Hodges have taken a six-month break from their

swimming routine. Damon and Ian just entered new age divisions, and anyway, everybody needs a break.

But the chances are good they'll be back at it after Christmas.

On how they got started in the first place, Peggie said, "Ian has little fingers on his left hand (and has had since birth) and because of that the muscles weren't developing right in his arm."

"So we felt like, and the doctor did too, that a regular swim program would be really good for him."

Competitively, she adds, "he did a lot better than we thought he'd ever do."

Ian, despite his handicap, played baseball on Curt Kennedy's Sandy "C" team. He'd wear his glove on his righthand, make the catches, take the glove off and throw with his right hand.

His father said he consistently hits singles and doubles, as well.

Ian said he likes both baseball and soccer, and the Hodges feel that no matter what sports Ian and Damon choose later on, swimming is the right choice for now.

"Now that I'm an adult I'm a half-baked piano player. My friends are good piano players because their moms made them practice," said Peggie.

"I think of that when I start feeling guilty about making my kids go to practice," she said.

When Damon and Ian receive their ribbons and awards, "They don't relate that to the fact they worked real hard," said Peggie.

"They don't say, 'Oh mom, I'm so glad you made me go to practice.'"

Nonetheless, the Hodges are betting that some day their kids will be glad they were started on a fitness program that can be continued for life.

Young volleyball team has 'potential'

by SCOTT NEWTON

"We have a young team with a great deal of potential," Ron Grantz, volleyball coach, told The Post earlier this week.

The Pioneers open their season Tuesday against Barlow High School, with the home game beginning about 7:30 p.m.

Reportedly, it's been three seasons since Barlow has lost a league game. "It'd be nice to change that," Grantz said.

Sandy lost two all-league players to graduation, although two returning starters "could be the best setters in the league."

Seniors Paige Daugherty and Linda Mosbrucker both have two years of varsity experience behind them,

and they'll be depended upon to take leadership roles.

The Pioneers will have a different look this year. Last year one player (Mosbrucker and '82 graduate Patsy Wessellink) was the setter at all times. This year Daugherty and Mosbrucker will be in opposite positions in the lineup, with the one in back playing setter and the other playing as a hitter.

Though they could be the best two setters in the new Mt. Hood Conference, Grantz said Daugherty may be a slightly better hitter, while Mosbrucker holds the edge in setting.

A number of factors are expected to come into play Tuesday night. Mosbrucker is out for a few days after having been bitten by a dog.

Junior Tamee Lindsey, who has

been "very impressive," will not play because of a family obligation, and junior Cindy Rasmussen is suffering what is believed to be shin splints.

Nerves are also expected to be a factor, and "weird things happen in a situation like that."

Serving is expected to be critical. Barlow players typically serve hard, and if they get them in they're tough. If they're off, it could be a factor in Sandy's favor.

The Pioneers were 9-5 last year, finished second in the Timber Valley League and made the state playoffs.

Making the playoffs is the goal this year. "If we learn from our mistakes we'll be pretty tough second half," Grantz said, adding that doing well at the end of the season is always more

important than starting well.

Grantz said he'll be experimenting with the lineup, trying to find players who work well together.

Lori Shelton is the team's third senior, with one year of varsity experience. Other juniors include Jill Ingram, Carrie Watt, Carrie Byrd and Denise Proctor.

Grantz said he has the best sophomore class in the six seasons (this will be his seventh) he's been coaching volleyball.

Judi Duff and Michele Fleischman made the varsity after a successful freshman season. Tracy Thompson, Chris Muff and Wendy Heckard could have made the varsity other years, but Grantz said it's important that they gain playing experience this season.

Area ski resorts did well

The past ski season was far better than the previous season at the 25 ski areas in Oregon and Washington located on National Forest lands, according to Regional Forester Jeff M. Sirmon, of the USDA-Forest Service.

Recently-compiled use figures show all ski areas bounced back from the snowless, economy-plagued season of the winter of 1980-81.

Ski areas in Oregon were also up slightly from the 1979-80 season, but those in Washington did not quite reach the level of two years ago.

Ski area operators pay a fee to the government for use of the National Forest lands. Of those

receipts, 25 percent is returned to the counties in which the ski areas are located, Sirmon said.

In Oregon there were a total of 1,260,286 skier visits this season. In 1980-81 there were 868,282 skier visits. In 1979-80 there were 1,194,614 skier visits.

In Washington there were 1,505,898 skier visits this past season. In 1980-81 there were 604,128 skier visits and in 1979-80 there were 1,531,437 skier visits.

In the Mt. Hood National Forest, for 1981-82, the following skier visits were reported: Cooper Spur, 14,183; Mt. Hood Meadows, 305,210; Multitorpor Ski Bowl, 81,109; Summit, 7,828; Timberline, 152,841.

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