

# THE BRAVE HEARTS



Kumarpal Desai

# **The Brave Hearts**

**Kumarpal Desai**

**Eye Care Foundation  
Mumbai**

Desai, Kumarpal  
The Brave Hearts  
Kumarpal Desai - Ahmedabad :  
Eye Care Foundation, Mumbai  
ISBN : DDC 796.092 088 08

Price : Rs. 150    First Edition : August 2009    © Kumarpal Desai

Eye Care Foundation  
Mumbai

Also available at :

Gujarat Vishwakosh Trust  
52/2, Ramesh Park Society,  
Nr. Usmanpura, Vishwakosh Marg,  
Ahmedabad-380 013  
Phone : 2755 1703

Institute of Jainology  
B-101, Samay Apartments,  
Azad Society, Ambawadi,  
Ahmedabad-380 015  
Phone : 2676 2082

Gurjar Agencies  
Opp. Ratanpole Naka,  
Gandhi Road,  
Ahmedabad-380 001  
Phone : 2214 9660

Navbharat Sahitya Mandir  
Near Patasa Pole,  
Gandhi Road,  
Ahmedabad-380 001  
Phone : 2213 9253

Printers :  
Dream Printers  
Sabarmati, Ahmedabad-380 005.  
Mobile : 99988 90233  
hitamitsdream@gmail.com

## ***Dedicated to***

*My dear friend*

***Ervad Burjor Hormusji Antia,***

*a solicitor by profession but a noble human being*

*wedded to service to humanity,*

*one who is always willing to help*

*the needy and the deprived,*

*a philanthropist par excellence and*

*a Parsi thinker who believes in the*

*philosophy of 'paying back to society.'*

**Kumarpal Desai**

When the Great Scorer comes to  
write against your name  
He marks - not that you won or lost – but  
how you played the game.  
– Grantland Rice

## Preface

---

Life does not mould the victor but it is the victor who moulds life. A human being who is endowed with strong willpower is capable of crossing any hurdle, or overcoming weaknesses and limitations. Generally speaking, a physically challenged or a weak person has to lead the life of helplessness. The person has to live a dependent's life. It is most unfortunate that the immense capabilities that are inherent in such persons, be they blind, deaf or invalid in any form, remain dormant due to the neglect they suffer from society and from individuals

The object of this book is to awaken society to the plight of such people and enlighten it about the immense potentialities and capabilities of these people so that they can lead a life full of dignity and respect rather than that of helplessness and dependency.

It is generally believed that only those who are physically strong and stout can accomplish success in the sphere of sports and games. A person who is blind can at best become a musician, but it is difficult to believe that such a person can also become a mountaineer, a trekker or a boxer. That is why this book tries to highlight the glorious achievements of those disadvantaged persons who, inspite of their handicaps have made an indelible mark in the field of games and sports through sheer determination, perseverance and struggle. If the physically challenged and disabled can show their strength in

spheres in which physical strength is considered to be the most important factor, then it can be safely assumed that they can shine out like bright stars in other spheres too.

At present more than ten per cent of the total population of the world is suffering from some physical disability or the other. In India alone there are more than seventy million people who are either blind, deaf or suffer some other physical disadvantage. Every year, nearly fifty thousand people are added to this category due to poverty, ignorance, bigotry, superstition or some kind of deficiency at the time of birth. In Gujarat, the number is about one million. Every year, the third Sunday of March is celebrated as 'World Handicapped Day'. On this day games and sports competitions are held exclusively for these people all over the world, to prove thereby that they are really not helpless at all. On the contrary, they are an active segment of society, which is full of vigour and vitality.

Nevertheless in the sphere of games and sports, people who are physically challenged have added pomp and splendour by dint of their strong willpower and the force of their determination. The main thrust of the Olympic Games is not on achieving victory but on participating in the games with a buoyant human spirit. In the same way, true success in life does not lie in conquering something but in facing difficulties with a fighting spirit.

The success stories included in this book and more particularly the details of the determined fight with which they successfully overpowered their physical limitations have been narrated on the basis of personal interviews that were conducted with each one of them. Similarly, sincere attempts have been made to introduce as much variety as possible by the inclusion of the achievements of physically challenged or

deficient sports personalities from various other countries. Foot-notes have been incorporated wherever necessary to give the exact details of particular events and their special features. For this, great effort had to be made to gather authentic information from various places and sources.

Significant contribution has been made in raising the morale and stirring the conscience of the Gujaratis by the renowned saint Poojya Shri Mota and also by the well known cricketer and humanitarian Shri Vijay Merchant who was the spirit behind the sports events that are annually organised for them in the country. I was fortunate enough in obtaining from them a foreword and a preamble for this book. I am very thankful to Shri Anandjibhai Dossa, for his comments on the book.

Gujarat still lags behind when compared to other states in the sphere of games and sports. Also, there are very few books written in Gujarati on that subject. In foreign countries, books on games and sports written with special style and flavour find a place in the realm of literature and are very popular. I am glad that this book – the first of its kind and written with a view to inspiring has been well received in various quarters. The first edition was published in 1973 and reprints followed in 1976 and 1985. A few schools imparting education especially to the physically challenged have incorporated it as a text-book in their curriculum. Its Hindi translation was serialised in the periodical 'Anuvrat'. It was awarded a prize in the category of outstanding literary works written in Gujarati. The writer received an award at the hands of the then Governor of Gujarat Shri K. K. Vishwanathan, which was instituted by the lions club for writing such an excellent book. What is more significant and noteworthy in all this is the fact that the book has been brought out in the Braille script also so



that it can easily be read by the blind.

The Book 'Apang na Ojas' in Gujarati has been immensely popular and its fifth edition has been the light of the day. In 2002, its Hindi version, titled 'Apahij Tan, Adig Mann', was published and it received wide acclaim, and 2nd and 3rd edition was brought out in 2005 & 2006 respectively. A CD of the Hindi edition was made available by the Blind Men's Association (Andhjan Mandal) and Shri Jasubhai Kavi. It is hoped that the English edition of the book also receive wider readership.

I shall be failing in my duty if I do not thank the following for their support and cooperation which helped me a great deal in the writing of this book.

Shri Jaysukh S. Mehta, Shri Komal R. Mehta, Shri Narendra Shah (London), Shri T. J. Purani, Shri B. M. Mulaye and Shri Navnitbhai Shah (Ashapura), Shri Chetan Shah, Shri H. C. Parekh and Shri Rasikbhai Doshi of Eye Care Foundation for the publication of the book.

29-1-2009

- Kumarpal Desai

## Foreword

---

- Vijay Merchant

[India's renowned cricketer, worked for and championed the cause of the differently abled.]

Mr. Kumarpal Desai has done me the honour of asking me to pen a foreword for this book, *Apangna Ojas*. May be my deep involvement in the cause of all handicapped people — the blind, the paraplegic, the deaf and mute, the leprosy-affected and the mentally sub-normal — has induced him to approach me. I consider this as a very great compliment.

Who are the handicapped? Is it those who are at birth affected by some handicap or those who suffer a handicap later in life? Are they really handicapped in the sense in which we consider a handicapped person? I do not think so. I have always believed that the blind are not those who have no eyes to see but those who have the eyes to see but will not. Similarly, the above categories of the handicapped are not the handicapped people really, but it is we the common people in society who will not see, understand and appreciate the great fight that these people put up for survival in a very competitive world. They do many things which all able-bodied people can do and sometimes do them even better than us. I have a young married lady in our Hindustan Mills by the name of Meenakshi Bhatt. She is totally blind and so is her husband Odhavji Bhatt. They have now been married 9 years and they have two lovely sighted daughters. Ever since their

marriage, Meenakshi has been cooking all her vegetarian dishes (being a strict vegetarian) on gas without any sighted help. The only person who helps her is her blind husband. I have seen for myself her cooking and tasted the meals that she has prepared. The fact that she has not been scalded, let alone burnt, during these nine years indicates that she is more conscious of safety than we the sighted people are. Tell me then who is blind? The same applies to all the other categories of the handicapped.

If you don't believe what I have stated, then you have merely to go through Mr. Kumarpal Desai's magnificently written book where he has brought out most effectively the fight for survival put up by the handicapped people and the measure of their success. Believe me, not only these people about whom he has written the articles deserve our greatest compliment for batting on a wet wicket but also Mr. Kumarpal Desai deserves our gratitude for having brought awareness in our society of the battle for survival of such large-hearted handicapped people. I trust Mr. Kumarpal Desai's book will receive the response it deserves because a treatise of this nature is also a service to the handicapped.

I wish the book every possible success.

## An Inspirational Gem

---

- Mota

[A spiritual preceptor, brought about a silent social religious and cultural revolution in Gujarat.]

Jaibhikhkhu has been a family name in Gujarat. His efforts were always directed to enlighten the minds and thoughts of the people of the state through his writings, more particularly through his regular column in the 'Gujarat Samachar' entitled 'Int Ane Imarat'. Jaibhikhkhu's mind and his thinking were always beyond the pale of sectarianism. His son Kumarpal has proved to be a worthy son to a worthy father. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the son has even surpassed the father in respect of a few things, thereby bringing glory to his youthful energy. Kumarpal has not only preserved the rich traditions left behind by his father as a litterateur but has in some respects improved upon it. Moreover, he does not stop there. His vision broadens with thoughts as to how the best among human beings blossom, how the heart of each is attracted towards courage, valour and buoyancy of spirit that lie among men and women. This book of his entitled 'Apang-na Ojas' i.e. the valour of the handicapped is a product of the craving of the writer for all that.

The contents of the book refer to a few unique events that have actually taken place in the lives of a few men and women – events which would normally be considered unthinkable for them. The valour and the will-power of these people are beyond ones comprehension. At times, the ultimate

determination on the part of a person to achieve something that ordinarily appears to be beyond reach alone results in such acts of valour and virility. Every character included in this book leaves the reader tremendously inspired. One is kindled with the thought that when one is backed by determination and a strong will-power, nothing on this earth is impossible to achieve.

The writer of this book has done a great service to society by describing and highlighting the acts of valour and bravery of those who are physically handicapped. Very often the physical disability in a person not only makes him bodily incapacitated but also mentally dependent. The book throws light on the bravery and courage of such persons who could overcome not only their physical incapacity but also the psychological trauma associated with it.

The field of literature also calls for a change now. The type of literature that people in general and youth in particular are addicted to reading these days, makes one intellectually weak, disabled and amorous. At a time when society is degenerating, this book written by Kumarpal Desai depicting and describing the unimaginable acts of valour and bravery on the part of the physically challenged will certainly go a long way in inspiring the future generations to make their lives virtuous.

While one goes through the pages of this book, one wonders as to the sources from which the writer must have collected the required information and the tremendous efforts he must have made to gather the same. I am greatly impressed by his aptitude towards the acts of valour, virility and bravery undertaken by the physically handicapped persons. I am personally thankful to Kumarpal Desai for giving me this opportunity of going through the book and also for writing a few words about it.

If society as a whole is positively oriented towards this kind of literature, it would go a long way in changing the

tastes, attitude and aptitude of the people and would inculcate in them respect for other's virtues and achievements. This would take society towards progress and development.

No society can undertake the path of progress and development merely with the help of money and wealth alone. Only making society virtuous and progress-oriented in actual practice can do that. I crave for the establishment of such a society.

I am more than confident that the efforts of Kumarpal Desai in enlightening the people about the superhuman acts of the physically handicapped will inspire them to emulate such brave acts and will kindle sparks of courage and bravery in the life of each one of them. The book adequately highlights the greatness of man's mind with which one can achieve anything one aspires for. The stories of valour and bravery of the men and women whose achievements have been highlighted in this book will inspire others to resolve that they too can do so with utmost determination and firm intention on their part.

I sincerely wish that Kumarpal continues to contribute this kind of literature in the days to come so that society as a whole is greatly benefited in changing its orientation towards real progress and development.

The special feature of the style with which Kumarpal writes is clearly noticeable in the columns that he contributes in the Gujarat Samachar. Nevertheless, the style with which this book has been written by him is very simple, intelligible even to a lay man and most appropriate for each of the events that he has narrated in the book. He has mastered the art of expressing the acts of valour and courage of those who have turned what is generally thought to be impossible into a reality in their actual life. I hope, he pens down many such writings in the future to come.

I once again congratulate him for writing this book.

## Contents

---

1.	Differently Abled But Not Disabled	19
2.	Loss of Sight, A Lot of Insight	26
3.	Courage Personified	33
4.	Daredevil Terry Fox	49
5.	The Heart of A Champion	53
6.	The Champion of Champions	60
7.	The Bravest of The Brave	66
8.	Triumph Over Mind	68
9.	Let Everest Beckons	73
10.	Sweet Are The Uses of Adversity	80
11.	The Brave Olympian	85
12.	The Crippled Who Ran The Fastest	90
13.	A Man of Grit And Determination	94
14.	The Fighter Par Excellence	98
15.	The Swimmer Who Challenged Fate	104
16.	The Dauntless Nari Contractor	109
17.	The Palmless Wrestler	114
18.	The Polio-stricken Swimmer	120
19.	Strong Mind, Unflinching Spirit	122
20.	A Marksman Extraordinary	129
21.	A Runner Who Knew No Hurdles	134
22.	The Incredible Hammer-Thrower	138
23.	The Legless Wonder	142
24.	An Incurable Optimist	144
25.	The Sightless Wrestler	148
26.	Never Say Die	151
27.	A Fighter All The Way	153
28.	Where There Is a Will, There Is A Way	155
29.	Bent But Not Broken	158

## About the author

---

Dr. Kumarpal Desai, over a period of four decades, has acquired formidable reputation as a writer of inspirational, spiritual and value enriched literature not only in the state of Gujarat or the country but at the international level too. His contribution to the fields of literature, education and journalism in particular and society in general has been noteworthy. He espouses human values and his writings reflect these values in abundance. He has authored more than a hundred books which encompass a wide spectrum, comprising biography, criticism, research, translation, novella, religion and children's literature. Five of his books have received Central Government awards and four have been accorded rewards by the State Government. His volume 'Naani Umar, Motu Kaam' was adjudged the best children's book among all the languages of India. His biography of Lal Bahadur Shastri 'Lal Gulab' sold 60,000 copies at one go. Another of his creation 'Apang na Ojas' has been hailed as the best book from the perspective of the physically challenged and its braille Hindi and English version has also been brought out.

His Ph.D. thesis was on 'Mahayogi Anandghan' which was the result of his researching 400 manuscripts. Three books based on his extensive research have also been published. Former President of 'Gujarat Sahitya Parishad', Shri Kumarpal Desai is the trustee of the first of its kind Gujarati Encyclopaedia 'Vishvakosh' and is also the vice-president of Gujarat Sahitya Sabha.



Dr. Desai taught Gujarati literature for 38 years and retired as the Dean of the faculty of Arts and Director, School of Languages, Gujarat University. He was also the Head, Dept. of Gujarati, Gujarat University. 20 students has acquired their Ph.D. Degree under him. He has the unique distinction of being a Ph.D. guide in four disciplines - literature, journalism, Jain Philosophy and peace-related research.

In the field of journalism, he has been active for the last forty years and his contribution has been noteworthy. His five weekly columns 'Int ane Imarat', 'Jhakal Banyu Moti', 'Pandadu Ane Pyramid', 'Aakaash Ni Olakh' and 'Parijat No Parisamwad' have been immensely popular. He has written two seminal books on Journalism - 'Akhabari Lekhan' and 'Sahitya Ane Patrakaratva'.

If as a writer, Dr. Kumarpal Desai has carved out a niche for himself, as a gifted speaker he has lectured extensively on Indian culture and Jain philosophy in England, America, East Africa, Canada, Singapore, Belgium, Hong Kong and Dubai. He is much sought after during Paryushan Parva and is often invited to these countries for lecture series.

Dr. Kumarpal Desai, the son of renowned author Shri Jaybhikhkhhu, is a multi-faceted personality and has excelled in wide-ranging fields. He has earned for himself a rightful place in the pantheon of writers, social workers and thinkers. As a crowning glory to his illustrious career, spanning four decades, the Government of India conferred on him the coveted **Padmashri** Award on 26th January, 2004, in recognition of his invaluable contribution to education, literature and culture at the hand of the then President of India Dr. A. P. J. Abdul Kalam.

## *The Brave Hearts*

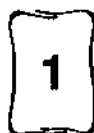
## Opinion

*Every piece of writing by Shri Kumarpal Desai is full of variety and deep thinking. His book entitled 'Apang Na Ojas' (Valour of the Handicapped) is inspiring not only for those who are physically handicapped but also for those who are physically fit, hale and hearty. It is so very useful that in my opinion it should be published in many more languages.*

*— Anandji Dossa*

*Life does not determine a champion; a champion determines life. The Olympic Creed says, "The glory of the Olympic Games is not in the victory but in taking part – like a man." The essential thing in life is not in the conquering, but in the fight.*

*— Rev. Bob Richards*



## Differently Abled But Not Disabled

---

Walter Davis was only eight years old when he was struck with polio that cripples millions in the world for their entire life time. The attack was so severe that he could not operate even a single muscle on his own. He had lost control over the entire muscle system in his body. His hands and legs stopped functioning. And yet he had not given up. He undertook a massive effort to put fresh life in his muscle system. He would constantly undertake various kinds of physical exercises. At times he would get exhausted, physically tired, would even stumble down and yet he would not accept defeat. Gradually he started recouping from the effects of polio and yet his legs remained absolutely inactive and non-functioning. At an age when a child is supposed to jump and play, Walter could not even stand on his own. His doctors had already given up hopes of any recovery. They even ventured to say that this child would never be able to move his legs. He will have to use crutches or a wheelchair for the rest of his life.

Walter did not lose heart. There was a ray of hope within him – nay a strong craving. Once he patted his legs and said fondly, “My dear dumb friends ! One day you will–start walking and running. You will even start jumping. You will jump so high towards the skies that you can even touch its heights. Till then, my friends, keep cool, do not lose heart. I too will retain my confidence intact.”

While saying this, the child lost its balance and crumpled onto the bed.

Walter's mother who was in the adjoining room overheard him. She rushed to his bedroom and started enquiring, "Dear Walter, with whom were you talking?"

Walter replied, "I was talking with my legs."

"With your legs?" The mother was greatly puzzled.

"Would they have the faculty of listening?" She asked.

"Yes mother! My legs may not walk, but they do listen to what I say" – Walter replied.

"Is that so! What did you tell them?" The mother anxiously enquired.

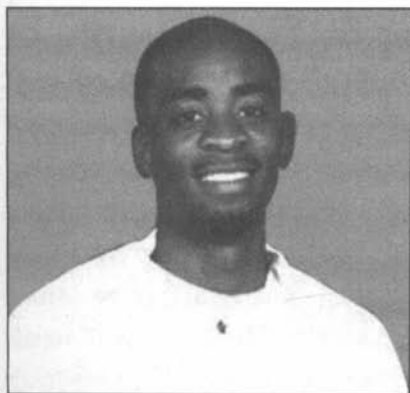
Walter replied, "Mother, I told them that they should not be embarrassed, nor should they be afraid of anything. They should not lose courage. Today they may not be in a position to walk, but a day will come when they will be able to jump high up in the sky!"

"Bravo! Well done!! You will surely be able to jump, you will be able to run like any other child of your age. If you do not harbour any kind of disappointment, you will surely be able to do anything that you wish to."

Since that day the mother constantly encouraged her son and enthused him to ensure that he did not fall prey to any kind of despair or despondency. She used to cajole him to build confidence in him. Along with that, she also used to massage his legs and administer other kinds of treatment. The result of all this was that after spending five long years in a wheelchair, Walter started walking with the help of crutches.

Once in the town of Bomant where Walter lived, a high jump competition was organised which Walter wanted to witness. He went to the ground with the help of his crutches.

A large number of children had assembled there. They



*Walter Davis*

were enjoying the fun all around by doing various kinds of acrobatics. At one place, on the ground, a stick was placed horizontally on two vertically fixed poles. Walter saw that every participant would take a start from a distance towards the poles, take a stroke on reaching near them, would

throw himself into the air to cross the horizontal pole balanced on the vertical poles. Walter enjoyed the fun seeing many children repeating the same action.

Little Walter sitting mutely on one side of the ground had the itching to do the same as the other children were doing. But alas ! He looked at his numb legs and at the crutches that were lying beside him on the ground. He was greatly disappointed.

He realised that while he could not even walk, the question of taking a high jump was far beyond him. Just then he remembered the words of his mother: "If you do not harbour any kind of disappointment or dejection, you will surely be able to do anything that you wish to."

Walter continued to enjoy the fun that was going on at the ground. One child jumped so high that he broke the record that was set earlier by another participant. There was loud applause for him. He was awarded the first prize in the event. Walter too joined others in giving the winner a big hand. Walter looked at the winner while the latter was returning to his place with the prize. The winner was of the same age as Walter.

### *The Brave Hearts*

Walter started talking to himself, "I will also start walking one day like any other child in future. I will also start jumping over poles. A day will come when I will set a world record in high jump."

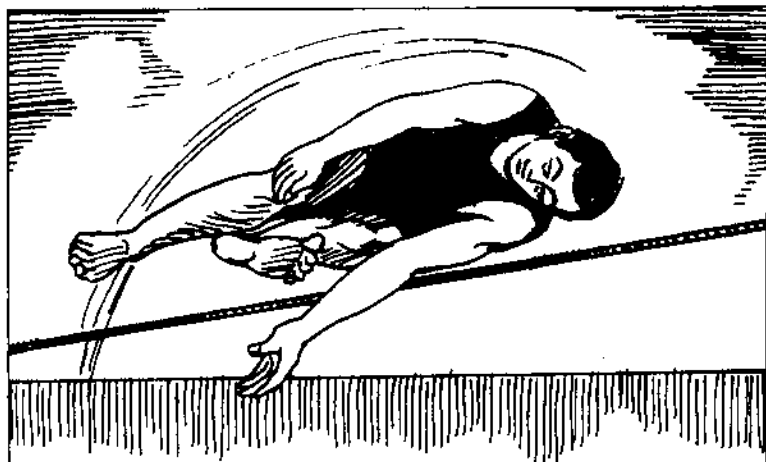
Walter, then, was physically disabled all right, but his determination was strong and unflinching. He may have been physically challenged, but his mind and heart were strong enough to achieve even the impossible. His body was weak, but his resolve was like a rock. He had confidence in his heart of hearts, "My physique today may be impaired, and yet a day will come when nobody will be able to surpass the record that I will set."

Since that moment he spared no pains. He followed every instruction that his doctors used to give him to its minutest details. Gradually he attempted to walk with the help of clippers that he would tie to his waist. Subsequently, he removed even the belts that he was wearing at his waist and his knee. A time came when Walter required only the clippers attached to the bottom of his legs. In course of time his muscles gathered strength and he started walking without anybody's help. At times he would lose balance and would even fall down, but gradually he got over this problem too with courage and conviction. A day came when he started walking normally, like any other person. The confidence that was planted in him by his mother began to grow. Even the doctors were amazed at what Walter had achieved by virtue of sheer determination. With all this, his resolve to set a world record in high jump still remained unfulfilled.

Gradually his body started gathering strength and his otherwise dead muscles showed signs of reviving. He also began practicing running from one end to another. Finally, he started practicing high jump bit by bit. It is well known that in

### *Differently Abled But Not Disabled*

high jump, one has to take a start by running slowly in the beginning, then when one comes near the poles pitched on the



*Walter Davis - the high jumper*

ground one has to increase one's speed, take a lap and then make the final assault by jumping above the horizontal pole. Compared to other sports, high jump requires lots of strength in one's legs.

Walter gradually started acquiring the skills required in high jump. He started jumping higher and higher. He secured the top position in the competition organised in his home town of Bomant. He also established a record in the high jump event in the state of Texas, U.S.A.

His achievements reached the selection committee for the Olympics in the U.S. which deputed him for the next Olympiad on behalf of the country. The Olympics is the world's greatest sport event held every four years. First ranking sports persons from each country participate in it. Every participant craves to reach the top in the event in which he or she participates on behalf one's own country. The XVth



Olympics were organised in Helsinki in Finland in which 4925 competitors representing 69 countries participated from all over the world. Twenty one year old Walter Davis had the distinction to represent his country.

At the moment when the high jump event was to start, Walter Davis walked to his place. At 2 mts. and 5 cm. in height, there was no one taller than him among the participants. He was facing the most coveted galaxy of participants before him. The principle which guided him throughout was 'never leave the stage in sheer desperation or disappointment'. Victory should be the only goal. Walter took the run, reached the poles and took a sudden jump. He ranked first in the event by jumping the height of 2 meters. And 4 cm. He set a new world record in the Olympics as far as the high jump event was concerned. He was the first to set a new world record in the XVth Olympics on the very first day of the games. He became the first recipient of the gold medal in those games. He was greeted with tremendous applause. His achievement assumed significance in the world of sports. He found a permanent place in the hearts of millions of sports lovers all over the world.

Walter did not stop there. He jumped higher and higher thereafter. In one of the non-official high jump competitions, he reached the height of 2 meters, and 13½ cm.

Walter Davis became the victor not only in the arena of sports but also in the arena of life as well. He was the same Walter about whom the doctors had predicted, when he was only an eight year old child, that he would not be able to move his legs on his own throughout his life; the same Walter turned out to be the recipient of a gold medal in the Olympics in an event which requires tremendous strength in the legs and in doing so he created a new Olympic record. Walter had proved

that a physically disabled person is not necessarily a helpless or a dependent being. He can achieve anything in life if only he does not lose heart and does not become despondent.



Bhupesh Modi, native of Viramgan in Gujarat and domiciled in the capital city of Gandhinagar, transcended his physical disability and achieved a unique feat in mountaineering. He was born with deformed legs - both the legs in inverted position - and the legs were set right after seven operations during 1963-64. Even after these operations, he experienced excruciating pain while walking. He would not be able to walk properly and could not set his feet where he wanted to and thus lived a miserable life. But in 1984, he found a messiah in Shri Vijay Merchant, who had been working tirelessly for the physically challenged. He encouraged him and told him that he had the ability to conquer the Himalayas and the Alps.

These words injected a fresh hope in Bhupesh and he took up the challenge. In 1998, he climbed the highest peak Jand Fro on the Alps and in 2004, he scaled Greet Rockner, the highest peak in Austria. If this was not enough, he also scaled the summits of Hanuman Timba and Biyas Kund in the Himalayas and the Bakartej summit near Leh, Ladakh. When he set out to scale the Alps summit, the orthopedic doctors had advised him against undertaking the adventure and two times he escaped from the jaws of death. Not to be deterred, he persevered and triumphed. He now nurtures the desire to climb North Pole Mountains in Alaska where the temperature is minus 13 degree celsius. Since he follows Jain religion and being a strict vegetarian, his staple food in foreign countries was soup and roasted chappatis (khakhara). Bhupesh Modi did what a person with normal feet would not dare to !



## Loss of Sight, A Lot of Insight

---

Once upon a time seven young men had a dream – a dream that would possibly never come true. All the seven men were twenty years old and very handsome. All of them were very courageous at heart. They decided to do something which no one else till then had the courage to do. Then alone would they get fame and bring glory to their youthful existence. They thought they should climb a mountain and reach its top. They knew that many people had climbed smaller mountains. An expert mountaineer could easily reach the tops of such small mountains. These seven men had no interest in such small adventures. They wanted to undertake something more significant in terms of courage and virility. They had the craving to accept a greater challenge in which they can face more and more difficulties and enjoy the dangers involved in it.

These seven men told to themselves that if at all they had to climb a mountain, then why not climb the highest mountain in the African continent, namely, Mount Kilimanjaro ? It is so high that people nicknamed it as the 'seat of God.' After-all the seat of God is bound to be very high – beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. Being so, everyone used to worship it with great awe and devotion.

The height of this mountain is 19,340 feet and its peak is always covered with snow all throughout the year. The

climate is cold beyond imagination with cold winds continuously blowing over it.

The seven men decided to undertake the adventure at a time when none of them had climbed even a hill. For them it was too much to think of climbing the Kilimanjaro. It was a very difficult project for them.

What was most surprising was the fact that all the seven young men were completely blind. For such persons, even to walk on a smooth surface required the help, assistance and support of others. They had to carry a walking stick which helped them walk step by step and that too with care and caution. They used to often stumble when they could not feel the unevenness of the ground. For such persons, the idea of climbing Kilimanjaro was probably a feat of sheer madness. Literally speaking, Kilimanjaro meant a 'lighted mountain'. How can the blind lay an assault on it ?

Every one who came to know about the proposed adventure of these seven blind men merely laughed it off.

Someone would say, "Young men, it is merely a stunt. When you cannot even walk properly, how can you climb a mountain ? And that too the tallest, the highest and the biggest in Africa ? The Kilimanjaro on which even the sighted ones may have to accept a defeat ?"

Someone else uttered a mild warning to the seven prospective climbers, "Dear friends ! Please give up the whole idea at once. It is full of risks. If you lose a step and tumble down in a street, there will at least be someone who would give you a hand of help. But if you miss a step in the mountain you will fall straight in the valley and there would be no one there to save you."

One who was more experienced among the critics offered

a piece of advice, "You can walk with the help of a walking stick. You can even run if someone shows you the way. Only recently four blind young men from England crossed the English Channel from France to England in just 14½ hours. Why don't you do something similar to that ? Just give up the idea of climbing the mountain."

Many more offered unsolicited advice to them. A few sounded warnings of various types of the risks involved in the project. But the seven Africans were determined to go ahead with their dream and not to retract from their resolve inspite of the prospect of possible calamities. They resolved to do something, to achieve something that no blind person had ever done before. Additionally, the seven men were firm in their heart of hearts that they should do something unique which would normally be considered reserved for normally sighted.

Having thus taken a firm decision, all of them started preparations for the proposed climb. They started undergoing physical hardships to get tough, no matter what others said. A few even cut jokes at them, some derided them, and others called them mad caps that were building castles in the air. Yet the seven did not budge an inch from their determination. Instead they started undergoing training meant for the climbers and mountaineers, the only resolve in the minds of each one of them being to conquer Kilimanjaro.

The seven blind men belonged to different countries and nationalities. For instance, John Opiyo, Tofiri Kabuka and Laurence Serwambala came from Uganda, Moses Mutie and Lurmasen Andeketi came from Kenya while Noel Palour and Mathias Gailanga had their origin in the country called Tanzaniya. While climbing the mountain mutual understanding and coordination were most imperative.

For two long years thereafter they spent hours daily in preparation and training, including acclimatization exercises for ten days under the feet of the mountain. All this gave them enough idea about the difficulties and hazards they were likely to encounter.



*The determined march of Blind mountaineer*

The golden moment to begin the assault on Kili-manjaro finally arrived in February 1969. Alex Macay, an active member of the Association of the Blind in Kenya issued the following statement to applaud and recognise the grit and the courage of the seven climbers :

"The venture undertaken by the blind young men is neither a stunt nor a joke. The blind do not have to spend their years idling under the shadow of their Shamba (hut), leading the life of dependents. The assault will prove that the blind are not a burden on their respective countries; on the contrary they are as much an asset to their nations as those who are normal with their visions intact."

During the assault, each climber was carrying in his haversack tied to his back sufficient food, bedding, clothing and drinking water. All this and some contingency equipment amounted to about 40 kg. in weight. They also took with them four guides. Normally each climber is accompanied by a

separate porter to carry the extra weight, but in their case they were to share the assistance of only two porters between themselves. Each climber was presented with a Brail watch on which the following words were inscribed :

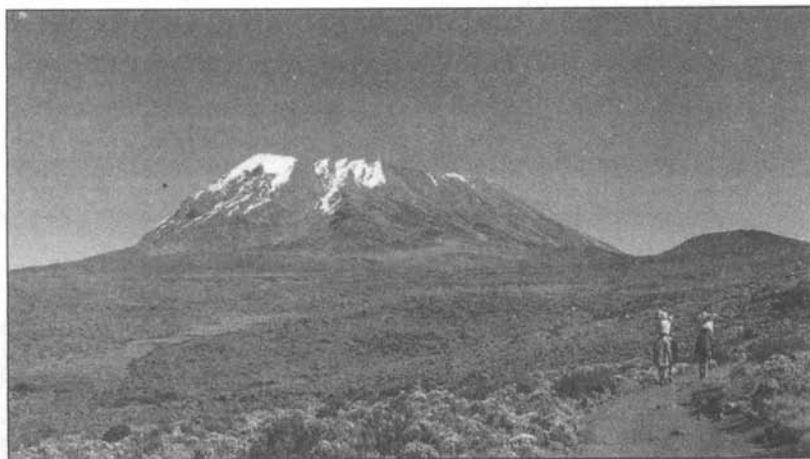
"The assault on Kilimanjaro, 1969."

Climbers always depend upon climatic ups and downs for their moves. When the weather becomes inclement, they have to halt their upward movement till the weather improves. Fortunately for the Kilimanjaro climbers the weather throughout was favourable. God is always on the side of the brave. For three consecutive days, special weather bulletins were broadcast by the Kenya radio for the benefit of the climbers.

Facing very many difficulties, the climbers were continuing the climb towards the top of the mountain. At times they would lose their balance on uneven terrain and as each one of them was carrying a load of about 40 kg., they also suffered injuries when falling down. But on all such occasions they would stand on their feet again within moments as if nothing had happened. So strong were their grit and determination that any sort of difficulties they faced would evaporate within moments.

At the completion of the climb on the first day, they rested in the lap of the mountain during dark hours. The same thing was repeated at the end of the second and the third day. After climbing continuously for three and a half days, all of them reached the 'Gilmen Point' which was located at the height of 18,635 feet. The top was just a few feet away from them now. The final assault was within reach. The guides accompanying the climbers sent a message that the glorious moment of conquering Kilimanjaro was on the cards at any

moment and that they were all ready for the impending final assault.



*Kilimanjaro Summit*

The news spread like wild fire throughout the length and breadth of the African continent. There was jubilation everywhere. The East African Airways flew sorties on the snow-clad mountains in honour of the brave climbers and saluted them by flying low at the top. The deafening sound of the planes flying over them in the otherwise peaceful surroundings filled their hearts with enthusiasm. The final assault was undertaken only by the seven blind climbers, leaving the rest behind on the slopes below

As they were approaching the peak, strong winds started blowing. Cold was increasing unabated. The temperature had fallen below zero degree centigrade. The guides were describing the beauty of the surroundings of the snow-clad mountains to the blind climbers. Their hearts were filled with thrill as if they themselves were seeing the beauty with their own eyes.

One has to take a detour around the mountain for quite



### *The Brave Hearts*

some distance to reach the peak of Kilimanjaro, called Kibo, which was like a latent Volcano. It was as if to circumnavigate the snow-clad dome of the mountain. One has to cover a distance of about 3000 feet. The final ascent was very difficult. There was snow all around. The snow path had to be pierced to make way for the next step. The distance of these last 3000 feet took the climbers almost nine hours to cover, out of which about four hours were spent on making their way through the snow, step by step with utmost caution.

On 22nd February, 1969 the brave blind climbers finally set their feet on Kibo, the top peak of Kilimanjaro, and the highest mountain of Africa with a height of 19,340 feet. Their achievement was the first of its kind which astounded the world.

The news was flashed by Jefre Selisbarry, who was accompanying them, in the following words :

"The difficulties were numerous and unending. Yet these were surmounted by the valiant and indomitable climbers who turned out to be men of tremendous grit and courage."

Queen Elizabeth of England sent a special message of congratulations. This was followed by a message from Lord Hunt, the leader of the group of climbers which had successfully conquered Mount Everest in 1953.

The seven sightless climbers surpassed the bravery, grit and endurance even of the sighted ones whose vision is intact.



## Courage Personified

---

This story dates back to 1946. The Indian cricket team was on a tour of England. The team was being captained by the senior Nawab of Pataudi, namely, Iftikhar Ali. He had asked a company manufacturing cricket bats in England to make a different type of bat for his son – a bat with which a six year old boy can play cricket easily and one which also carried the signatures of eminent cricket players of the time. The name of the company with whom the order was placed was Messrs. Gun & Moor Ltd., a company which used to prepare bats of various types but had never prepared a bat of such a small size and those too bearing signatures of leading cricketers. The company, however, prepared the bat as per order.

Iftikhar Ali, the skipper of the Indian team, wanted his son to step into his footsteps and to shine on the cricket field in the same manner in which he himself had done during his cricketing career. Unfortunately, he could not train his son Mansur Ali in achieving the prowess in the game because on the eleventh birth day of his son, namely, the 5th January 1951 Iftikhar Ali succumbed to a massive heart attack. In his death India had lost a good sportsman not only in cricket but in hockey and polo also.

Mansur Ali Khan, better known as Pataudi, went to England for studies. He had inherited the love of cricket from his father. While studying in the class room, his attention was

always diverted to the cricket field. Once his school the 'Lockers Park' played a cricket match against another school named Emsworth House. Little Pataudi played the game with full vigour and it is said that out of the 108 runs that his school team could muster, as many as 100 runs were scored by Pataudi alone and all the other ten batsmen together could score between themselves only 8 runs. When the other team was batting, Pataudi contributed to the fall of every batsman of the



*Iftikhar Ali*

rival team one way or the other either by his bowling or by holding catches or by running them out.

Thereafter Pataudi left Lockers Park and joined the well known school named Winchester College. In the summer of 1958, Pataudi got a chance to play against a team from Sussex County. This team had very eminent cricketers on its roll such as Robin Marker who was the captain, intelligent bowler Ian Thomson, and world renowned batsman and spinner Dennis Compton. In the company of such stalwarts, seventeen year old Pataudi showed his prowess in the match and he not only scored a century but snatched a victory for his team.

This young lad from the Winchester College was often seen on the football ground as well as taking part in a prominent tennis competition. However his main interest always remained with the game of cricket just like his illustrious father. In 1959 he donned the mantle of captainship of the school team. During that year he created a record by

scoring 1068 runs, the previous record being that of Douglas Jardine that had scored 997 runs in 1919. Pataudi thus broke the earlier record and set a new one that remained intact for forty long years.



*Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi*

Naturally the world of cricket started looking at Pataudi with great expectations. In 1960 Pataudi joined the Baliol College affiliated to the Oxford University. During one of the encounters between the Oxford University and the Cambridge University at Lords, Pataudi scored a brilliant century. When his team had lost three important wickets in just 32 runs, Pataudi came to the crease to bat. On that occasion he scored 131 runs with the help of 18 fours and a six. His father Iftikhar Ali, playing for the first time then, had scored a century years before in a similar encounter between the two teams. It was the first time that a son had emulated his father on the cricket ground. In the very first year, the junior Pataudi too got the 'Blue' emulating his father the senior Pataudi in this respect also.

In 1961 Pataudi's batting was in top form. He was to play a match against a strong Yorkshire County team which had Fred Truman, the well know fast bowler, playing for it. In this encounter too, Pataudi played like a seasoned player. He scored 106 runs in the first innings and 103 runs not out in the second innings. Immediately thereafter he scored 144 runs against Middlesex. Thus by scoring three consecutive

centuries in a row, Pataudi had created a sensation in the world of cricket. His father Iftikhar Ali was holding the record of consecutive four centuries for Oxford University. While playing against Glamorgan County, the Junior Pataudi was out against the bowling of Jim Mackonnan for one run, a run short because of which he could not equate the feat of his father. And yet, he had impressed everyone by his brilliant and forceful game. The leading cricket critic of England E. W. Swanton then wrote :

"In the canopy of heaven of cricket, the bright star of Pataudi is shining very brightly."

The cricket writers club of England honoured Pataudi by giving him the award of the 'most promising young cricketer'. Every time he played the achievements of his father stared at him. As captain of the Oxford team, Pataudi had scored 1216 runs in a year. His father had scored a fighting 1307 runs in 1931 which was a record for the Oxford University. The son was short of just 91 runs to equal that record. He still had three more matches to play. All eyes were on Pataudi, junior and everyone's expectations for him were very high.

Just at that time an unfortunate event took place in the cricketing career of Pataudi which created a ripple in the world of cricket. The fear that this fast shining cricket star would suddenly fall apart, gripped the lovers of the game.

It was the first day of the month of July 1961. On that day Pataudi had fielded the whole day in a match against Sussex. After dinner, he was returning to his lodge with his friends. It was a beautiful evening. The breeze coming from the sea filled the atmosphere all over. Robin Waters, the wicket-keeper of the Oxford University team was at the wheel. Suddenly a car came rushing out into the middle of the road. The two cars

collided. Pataudi sustained injuries on the right hand and the right shoulder. Waters was injured on the forehead. Pataudi had not realised that his right eye was also injured. While going to the hospital in an ambulance, Pataudi confided to his friend that his hand was injured and that he was not sure whether he would fully recover for the University match. There was no sign of injury to the eye, neither was there any pain.

The following morning when Pataudi woke up his doctor told him that a particle of glass from the front windscreen of the car had entered his right eye which would have to be operated upon. Pataudi was taken aback on hearing this. A surgeon was immediately summoned. Pataudi was operated upon twice. Due to the injury, the lenses of Pataudi's eye had melted. As the other portions of the eye had also sustained injuries, there was a permanent damage to his right eye.

The cricketing world was plunged into deep sorrow. 'Did this mean that it would no longer be possible to witness Pataudi's majestic batting?' Everybody asked. A bud was just about to blossom and before it reached perfection and ripened; it had withered, thought many.

There are games which can be played with one eye also, but certainly not a game in which one has to accurately judge the speed and spin of a fast approaching ball. It requires both eyes with perfect vision. The eyes should also be agile enough to judge the flight of a turning ball. How does one face a ball suddenly rising after pitching with only one eye? It requires a pair of eyes with perfect vision. Secondly, Pataudi was now to face a few of the greatest bowlers of the time who had mastered the art of twisting and spinning the ball using the agility of their fingers and the grit of their wrists.

### *The Brave Hearts*

The history of the game of cricket so far had on record four batsmen who had played with only one eye intact. One of them was Shafakat Hussain. He had toured England as a member of the team sponsored by the ruler of Patiala in 1911. During that tour he played in all 27 innings and scored only 232 runs with an average of 10 runs, and could capture 12 wickets from 99 overs with an average of 34 runs. This showed that he could not achieve much during the tour. Another player was from South Africa by the name of Nupen. He had lost one eye during a battle in the First World War. Thereafter he played test cricket on behalf of his country and became the greatest pace bowler of South Africa to date. One can become a bowler with one eye, but can one become a batsman? That was Bakwa Jeelani, who had to his credit the first hat-trick ever in the Ranji Trophy matches. Jeelani was a right hand medium pace bowler who made a hat-trick in 1934-35 in the very first Ranji Trophy match that he played on behalf of Northern India against Southern Punjab. He had toured England in 1936 as a member of the Indian team and had an opportunity to play the third test at Oval. He had also played two unofficial test matches against Australia in 1935. This medium fast bowler and a fairly good batsman met with a fatal accident in July 1941.

The fourth player in this series of one eyed players was none other than the great Jam Ranjitsinha who was known as a magician of the game of cricket. Before losing one eye, the eyes of this great player were so powerful that the bowlers who used to bowl against him used to say that Ranjitsinha could even see the stitches of the ball which was approaching him with great speed. He had lost the right eye in an accident in 1915. Thereafter he played only three first class matches in August 1920 and had scored 16 runs in the first match, 9 and 13

runs in the second match and only one run in the third match. His intention in playing these matches was different. He wanted to write a book on cricket in which he specially wanted to describe how one could bat with only one eye. Unfortunately, he could produce no such book during his life time.



*Tiger Pataudi*

Ranjitsinha wanted only to write a book of the kind mentioned above, but for Pataudi it was a challenge staring at him in actual reality. For him cricket was akin to his very existence. The love of cricket flowed through his veins. He had inherited it from his illustrious father.

There was pessimism everywhere. Almost everyone thought that the majestic batting of Pataudi, junior was now a matter of the past. There was only one person who was optimistic about his situation and that was none other than Pataudi himself. The principle of his life was, "God always helps the brave." Till then no cricketer with one eye had distinguished himself on the cricket ground as a batsman in the entire history of the game. Players like the great Ranjitsinha had also failed in this respect. But this 20 year old lad had not lost his confidence and nursed the hope that one day he would return to the game with a bang.



How can one, who is accustomed to using both eyes, function with only one eye? Difficulties accosted him every now and then. Describing his condition of those days Pataudi says, "Even my daily routine posed difficulties for me. After 3-4 weeks of the operation I went to the ground for net practice to find out how far my batting had been affected. Only a boxer who receives blows on his eye from the opponent alone can understand the predicament in which I was placed. I found it difficult even to judge the position and the distance of an object. For instance, when I wanted to light a cigar, I could not see one-fourth part of its end. When I wanted to pour water in a glass from a pitcher, the water spilled over the table instead of into the tumbler !" Pataudi passed through many such difficulties. Gradually he started learning afresh how to do many things in the given situation.

When he played at the 'net' for the first time thereafter, the difficulties he encountered were beyond his comprehension. Initially the bat and the ball would just not meet. He could not judge the speed of the incoming ball. Even with all this, he was not a person who would accept things as they were. He started practicing more and more. He started judging as to the kind of ball he would not be able to play. He changed his style of standing at the crease. He almost gave up his favourite stroke of hitting a 'half-volley'. He stopped hooking\* a ball by turning his bat and also gave up hitting the let cut\*\*, a stroke which was too risky. He started playing a

---

\* Mostly a fast, short pitched ball is hit in this manner. If the ball bumps and is coming in the line of the stumps, the batsman moved inside the crease and hits it. It is hit near or outside the leg stump. In doing so, the action of the bat and the rank of the batsman take the shape of a hook.

\*\* In this, the batsman watches the ball moving outside the off-stump and after it leaves, hits it either to the gully or to the slip.

straight ball by moving forward his bat and pad, while he started to drive hard the ball which was moving outside the wicket. Thus his struggle continued unabated. He was trying hard to find out his weaknesses and to rectify them by corrective measures.

Just at that moment he received the good news. He was appointed the skipper of the Board President's eleven that was to play a match against the MCC which was on a tour of India. Pataudi wanted to play more and more cricket. He also wanted to show his prowess on the ground. A match was played at Hyderabad against the MCC team. Pataudi with only one eye intact entered the fray. He was wearing a contact lenses in the right eye. Due to that he started seeing two balls at a time in the place of one, as if two balls at a distance of six inches were being hurled at him. He was hardly in a position to judge a delivery. He was greatly upset. During the tea interval while he was batting with 35 runs, he went to the dressing room and removed the lens. He returned to the crease after tea to score 70 runs, the highest score for his team.

His heart was constantly pulsating. He was straining himself to find out how he could improve his game. But because of his style of playing and his indomitable spirit, no one knew the seriousness of the injury he had sustained. He was still not in a position to move his hand from the injured right shoulder to hit the ball high. On the basis of his performance in the very first match after the injury, he was selected to play for India in the third test match at New Delhi against the MCC side. Thereafter Pataudi never looked back. He scored a century in the fifth test of the series played at Madras. He was repeatedly hitting the ball over the heads of the fielders. This was judged the best century of the series. His father had scored a century in the very first test match of his

career while the Jr. Pataudi scored a century in his third test. However Pataudi required only half of the time as compared to the time his father had taken to do so. He could score the century within two and half hours with the help of 16 fours and 2 sixes. India registered a victory in the Madras test and also won the rubber\* for the first time against England. Pataudi ensured a permanent place for himself in the Indian Team. The most surprising aspect of it was that he could do so within six months from the serious car accident in England !

Pataudi had lost the power from his right hand due to the accident. And yet he could regain his batting through his courage and determination. He started wearing his cap slightly turned to the right. Its shadow would cover his right eye and would thus prevent his seeing everything double. The serious injury he had sustained had not adversely affected his aggressive style of playing nor had it marred the charm of his game. Because of the damage to his right eye, he changed his position on the ground while fielding, from being close to the wickets and moved to the cover point. Very soon he mastered fielding at the cover point because of his agility, hard work, his most astonishing faculty to make accurate anticipations, quick movements and the stylish way he would stop the approaching ball and return it to the wicket-keeper with a flash. He soon turned out to be the best cover point fielder in the world. A man with only one eye, he made possible what otherwise appeared to be impossible. He achieved this by sheer hard work and continuous practice sessions.

In 1962, an important responsibility was placed on his shoulders. While the Indian team was on the tour of the West

---

\* In cricket the team which wins the series is said to have won the 'Rubber', although such a team is not given anything in reality. The term 'rubber' has been borrowed from the game of bridge, a game of cards

Indies under the captaincy of Nariman Contractor, the Indian skipper was hit on the head by a ball delivered by Charlie Griffith the mantle of captaincy was passed on to Pataudi who then was only 21 years, two months and 18 days in age. He thus became the youngest ever skipper of a team in the world. As captain, Pataudi changed the very style of his playing. In place of the earlier slow and tiresome cricket, he switched over to a fast, attractive and result-oriented play. He became the first aggressive captain after the great C. K. Naidu.

His struggle to achieve new heights continued unabated. God is always on the side of the brave, so it is said. Thus Pataudi went on amassing one achievement after the other. In 1963 when he returned to England, Pataudi was again made the captain of the Oxford University team. This was indeed a rare event that an earlier captain of the University team was called upon to shoulder the same responsibility again. The great batsman Ranjitsinha, Duleepsinh and Iftikhar Ali Pataudi – all had played test matches on behalf of England, but none of them was asked to don the mantle of captaincy of the University team during their student career. In comparison Pataudi was made the captain of the Sussex county team although a player like Jim Parks who had played test matches on behalf of England in the past was available for the job.

For two years from the date of accident, Pataudi could not throw the ball with his right hand. In the course of time, however the effect of the injury sustained by Pataudi on his right shoulder in the earlier accident was gradually reduced. In 1964 captain Pataudi scored 203 runs not out in the fourth test played at New Delhi and thus became the only Indian batsman to have scored a double century against England until then.

### *The Brave Hearts*

In 1964, Pataudi scored 128 runs not out in the first test that was played against Australia at Madras. He thus repeated the performance of his father who too had scored a century in his first test match against Australia. Like father like son. In the second test played in Bombay, Pataudi scored 86 runs in the first innings and 53 runs in the second innings at a time when the Indian team was virtually in a situation of crisis. India scored a memorable win in this test on the Vijaya Dashmi day. Under Pataudi's leadership, the Indian cricket team had leveled the series with Australia a team that was rated as a very strong team.

In 1967 in the first test played in England at Healingly, the performance of the Indian team was very poor. India could not face the mammoth total of the England side. In the first innings the Indian eleven could score only 164 runs. Falling short by 386 runs, India had to face a follow on. At that time Pataudi scored an unlikely 146 runs and that too in the company of the tail enders. The Indian team put up a respectable total of 510 runs. It was the highest score ever by an Indian team in the previous five consecutive tours of England. Pataudi's excellent all round performance injected fresh life in the otherwise weak batting side of India. Larry Constantine, the all-time great of the West Indies showered praise on Pataudi's performance in this match by calling it cricketing history's most courageous performance to date. A leading English newspaper, the 'Daily Express' called it 'one of the greatest and finest centuries of the modern times.' The newspaper further added, 'England salutes the tiger' (Tiger is Pataudi's nick-name) for his performance.

The Indian team toured Australia in 1967-68. Pataudi's thigh was injured at that time. The doctors had asked Pataudi not to participate in the second test to be played at Melbourne

and yet he did not heed that advice. The Australian pace bowler Graham Mackenzie was at the top of his game. India had lost 5 top batsmen in a row one after the other in just 25 runs. Pataudi came to the crease almost limping. He scored 75 runs and showed the grit of his bat. Pataudi was suffering from severe pain in his leg in the second innings. The leg was almost out of action. Yet



*Mansur Ali Khan Pataudi*

with only one leg intact, Pataudi scored 85 runs. Seeing him play that day everybody wondered how magical would have been his spell if both of his eyes and legs had been in perfect working order!

Next, the Indian team toured New Zealand, it recorded a convincing win of the series. The credit for winning the series, the first of its kind on a foreign soil, lay squarely with Pataudi.

In 1969, the New Zealand team came to India. In the first test played in Bombay, the visitors scored 229 runs in reply to India's score of 156. Thus India was playing the second innings with 73 runs in arrears. The top Indian batting side consisting of Abid Ali, Chetan Chauhan, Ajit Wadekar, Rusi Surti, Hanumantsingh and Farookh Engineer was already backing in the pavilion. By that time India had registered a surplus of 92 runs only. Coming to bat at such a critical juncture, Pataudi scored 67 valuable runs in 282 minutes. He played with great caution. A single mistake or a lapse on the part of Pataudi would have cost the Indian team heavily. Defeat stared in the eyes of India. But Pataudi turned the tables and registered a 60 run victory over the visitors. It was because of this victory that

India could then level the series with New Zealand.

In 1970 the Australian team was touring India. In the very first test played in Bombay, Pataudi scored a stylish 95 runs. The following year, India toured both the West Indies and England (1971). But due to his prior engagements in his occupation, Pataudi could not join the Indian team on the twin tours. In the year 1972-73, the English team toured India. The Indian batting side collapsed like a pack of cards before an average English bowling side. Just then Pataudi was recalled for the third test that was to be played in Madras. He had no hesitation to play under the captaincy of Ajit Wadekar who was his junior in cricket. A good player always loves the game more than anything else. Pataudi showed his full form in this match, so much so that the Indian team regained its called self-confidence. Even the weak middle-order Indian batting side appeared quite strong on the ground. Pataudi sent the spin bowler Pat Pockock twice to the fence consecutively in a single over, while in his subsequent over he scored one four to the mid-wicket and one six on the long-on to gather in all 10 runs in a single over. By hitting Pat for a six, Pataudi also registered a half century in the innings. He had scored 73 runs in the innings and was popularly nick-named as the 'Nawab of Chepak'.

In 1974-75, the West Indies team came to India under the leadership of Clive Lloyd. The Indian team that had visited England in the year 1974 under the leadership of Ajit Wadekar had lost all the three tests very badly in a row. The morale of the Indian team was completely shattered. Pataudi was recalled to take over the captaincy once again, a rare occurrence for Indian cricket. This was recognition of his ability and grit. As it was impossible for him to constantly play cricket in those days, it became difficult for him to prove his

real prowess during the visit of the West Indies team touring India then. Yet he showed his talent in the third test played on 27th December that year at the Eden Gardens, Kolkata. He scored 19 runs in a single over bowled by Van Holder which also included four fours. The contribution of Pataudi in snatching victories in the third test at Kolkata and the fourth test at Madras was very significant. He strongly believed that a test player must play the game continuously for 6-8 months in a year to keep himself fit. When he realised that he would not be able to spare so much time for the game, he decided to retire from cricket.

Mansuralikhan Pataudi is not only a cricketer, he knows how to play hockey too. He has earned a name in cycle polo also. He has been a good hunter and has shot about twelve tigers just with one eye. Being fond of music, he also plays tabla well. His cover drives in cricket would refresh ones memory of the great Walter Hemmond of England. His 'leg-glides' were also equally brilliant. It was a treat to see him hit the ball to the fence over the heads of the fielders.

So far in the history of cricket there has been none like him who played the game so well with just one eye. He played 46 tests in all, out of which he had captained the Indian side in 40 tests. He had also toured 5 countries namely Australia, England, the West Indies, New Zealand and East Africa. He had the distinction of scoring centuries in both innings of a match twice, once against the Yorkshire County match (1961) and then against the Services team in a Ranji Trophy match (1964-65). In the galaxy of 'Wisden's five best cricketers of the year, the name of Mansuralikhan Pataudi figured in the list for the year 1967. His father had also found a place on that list in 1932. In the history of Wisden, this is the only case where both father and son have been honoured in a like manner.



### *The Brave Hearts*

Pataudi has scored 2792 runs in all in 46 tests and 83 innings with an average of 34 runs and had held 26 catches in his cricketing career. He will find a permanent place in the history of the game of cricket for his aggressive approach, constructive batting, stylish fielding and sound captaincy. More than that he would always be remembered as the 'one eyed magician' of the world of cricket.



Shailesh Navinbhai Chaudhry, a deaf and dumb youth of village Salaiya, Ta. Mandavi of District Surat, participated in Deaf Olympics of Australia in 2006 and earned a place in top-ten and was ranked tenth. The village from which he hails has an Adivasi population of barely 1500 people.

Enduring economic hardships, Shailesh Chaudhry studied up to std. 10 in a Deaf & Dumb school in a small place called Kachholi. Despite his handicaps, he excelled in different sports such as high jump, long jump and discus-throw and was equally at home playing volleyball and table tennis. He won two gold medals and two silver medals at the national level competition for the Deaf & the Dumb. An adivasi by birth, born deaf and dumb, Shailesh Chaudhry by sheer dint of hard work and determination, won laurels for the nation.



## Daredevil Terry Fox

---

The story starts in the year 1977. A patient named Terry Fox was lying in bed with unbearable pain in his leg in a hospital in Canada. He was constantly screaming in agony and was intermittently making awkward movements of his leg.

The x-ray of his leg revealed that he was suffering from cancer. The doctors were very keen to halt the spread of the dreaded disease to other parts of his body. As a result his leg was amputated, and was replaced by an artificial wooden foot so that Terry Fox could eventually walk by himself.

The twenty two year old lad started wondering that if other diseases do have some cure or the other, why is only cancer considered incurable ? 'A cure must also be found for cancer, so that man can successfully fight against this dreaded disease', said Terry to himself.

Terry Fox posed this dilemma to his doctor who said that many diseases, once thought to be incurable, have now become curable because of medical research. However the cost of funding medical research for cancer is very high. If adequate funds could be earmarked for it, it would be possible to find a cure for cancer too, thereby sparing the lives of many patients who are afflicted by the disease.

Initially Terry Fox was dumb-struck by what the doctor had told him, but he also started thinking about the way he

could be helpful in this humanitarian task. He thought and thought about it. Many ideas came to his mind one after the other. He considered many plans and projects. Not one of them was easy to implement. Finally he thought of a plan that could be put into practice.



*Terry Fox*

One day in April 1980 an advertisement appeared in the newspapers of Canada stating that a daredevil youth, who has only one foot, has decided to cover the entire area of the country from one end to the other by running with the help of an artificial leg. This announcement created an upheaval in the whole country because geographically speaking Canada is a big country and therefore to cross it from one end to another by running on foot is difficult even for a strong person. How then would it be possible for Terry Fox to do it, more so when he was suffering from cancer and had an artificial leg !

Many people tried to dissuade him from undertaking such an adventure. Some thought that it was a mere folly of his which would ultimately ruin him. But he did not budge an inch and remained adamant. Ultimately his objective was too laudable to be discarded lightly. He wanted to raise funds for cancer research, to find a cure for the disease that was claiming so many lives in the world.

The entire country was eagerly awaiting the run to take place. The newspapers gave a prominent coverage to it. The Canadian radio also started broadcasting news about it for the benefit of the people. It received wide coverage on national

## *Daredevil Terry Fox*

television. Terry Fox began his one-legged run by dipping his artificial leg in the waters of the sea near the port of Saint Johns in New Foundland which is situated on the Eastern side of Canada. Newspapers as well as radio and television started giving day to day details of the event on their respective networks. Not only in Canada but also in the U.S., Terry Fox's run created sensation and received wide acclaim. Money started pouring in for cancer research.

When Terry Fox reached Toronto, he was given a warm welcome by its citizens. Men, women and children lined the route in thousands to give him an enthusiastic reception. He received a royal ovation and a lot of money too.



*The Terry Fox Race*

Terry Fox was accompanied by a team of doctors during the course of his run. The team used to examine him from time to time. When he reached the Thunder Bay region of Canada, doctors asked him to stop the run. Cancer had spread all through his body. He had already covered a distance of 3339 miles running with the help of his artificial leg. By now the media too had started collecting funds for his cancer research project.

Terry Fox continued his humanitarian run aimed at saving hundreds of patients afflicted with cancer all over the globe. In June 1980, he finally succumbed to the disease. Terry Fox, the great humanitarian was no more. By then a handsome

sum of (in Canadian currency here) equivalent to about 170 million rupees had already been collected. His martyrdom was acclaimed as his supreme sacrifice for the cause of humanity. The Governor General of Canada accorded him the status of "the greatest citizen of Canada" through a special proclamation.

Every year on September 19, 'one legged run' is organised in memory of Terry Fox. People in large number take part in it and collect funds for research in cancer.



In October, 1958, Greta Anderson, a thirty-year old housewife, became the first human being to swim the twenty-two-mile Catalina Channel—both ways.

Her over-all time for that forty-four-mile swim was twenty-six hours, fifty-three minutes, and twenty-eight seconds.

The unbelievable part of that 'first' in long distance swim-record breaking feat, Greta Anderson was crippled by arthritis.

## The Heart of A Champion

---

The Wimbledon tournaments held every year in England attracts world-wide attention of sports-lovers because it is the most important and coveted competitions as far as lawn tennis is concerned. We now take you to the last day's encounters pertaining to the year 1951 which were to be very keenly fought between the top players of the game. In the ladies' singles, the two top ranking players were to meet. Both of them had already played at the centre court in the past and had sufficient experience of playing at a place which was called the 'most holy place' for tennis players of the world. The place had assumed the significance and importance of a pilgrimage.

One of the American players who had reached the ladies' finals was Doris Hart and the other, slightly younger in age, was Shirley Fry. Both were partners in the ladies' doubles game. But today they were to face each other in the ladies' singles finals.

Doris Hart had reached the finals of the ladies' singles twice before in the years 1947 and 1948. She was defeated both times and had now reached the finals for the third time now in 1951. Being an experienced player, she was considered to be the favourite to win the finals that year. The spectators were full of anticipation and excitement.

The fact was that she had reached the finals by registering a great victory in the semi-final encounter. She had

snatched the semi-final victory fighting a great battle against all odds. It was not a match that had set any new records and yet it had assumed significance as a victory carved out with great determination and inner strength. Doris Hart had reached the fateful stage of the final round with grit and gumption. But to achieve that, she had to battle hard in her life like a brave soldier. If she had not successfully survived the onslaughts which she had to face every now and then in her real life, she would never have made it to the final of the Wimbledon and that would have shattered her life-long dream.

When she was a small child, she had accidentally fallen from the top of a high-rise building in her native town of Saint Louis and had seriously injured her right knee. Within moments of the fall, her right leg was completely paralysed. At that time everybody thought that Doris would have to lead her entire life thereafter as a dependent. She would not even be able to stand on her own and be self-supporting. The doctors treating her spared no efforts to ensure that she recovered from the accident, but all in vain ! They went to the extent of saying that she would never be able to walk in her life. They also suggested that her injured right leg should be amputated and be replaced by an artificial limb. In the course of time, the serious injuries suffered by her on the right leg also started affecting her left leg, which too was gradually becoming paralysed.

Her mother flatly declined to accept the advice of the doctors and vehemently opposed the very idea of amputation of her daughter's right leg. She was hoping against hope that one day Doris would fully recover and be independent. She constantly applied the physical therapy of massaging the injured leg of her daughter. Her efforts required tremendous patience. There are no limits to the love and affection of a

mother. After months of therapy, Doris's right leg showed some signs of improvement, although she was still not able to stretch her leg fully. She could use her right leg also only very sparingly. She still remained a physically handicapped person.

When difficulties come, they never come singly. They come like an army on the march. While Doris was gradually improving as far as leg injury was concerned, one more serious problem cropped up. She had to undergo an emergency



*Doris won't be able to walk the whole life', says the Doctor*

operation for some stomach ailment. Her doctors suggested that she be taken to Florida for change where the sun is very warm so that she would be able to recover very speedily.

After being in Florida for a year or so, she began playing tennis there. Her brother who was older than her by two years knew very well the health problems she was facing and yet he went on encouraging her to play the game. As time passed, her leg started gathering strength and she could now stretch it as required. She soon gave up the use of the wheel chair completely. Two years later, she started participating in competitions organised in the school where she was studying.



With the progress Doris was making, the happiness that her mother felt knew no bounds. Her mother sincerely felt that all that had happened was the result of God's grace and the inner confidence Doris had demonstrated during the past fateful days. It was as if the mother was watching a miracle with her own eyes. Her heart was always filled with happiness whenever she saw Doris playing tennis on the court. It is a game that requires constant movements of the legs, when playing the shots. The same leg which the doctors once wanted to amputate was now making swift and agile movements on the court.

The consistency of effort with which Doris had overcome her physical deficiency was the same with which she had now reached the finals of the ladies' singles in the Wimbledon tournaments.

On that afternoon in the month of July 1951, when Doris Hart walked to the centre court to play the finals, she received a tumultuous welcome and applause from the spectators who had assembled there to witness the event. In the encounter that took place then between Doris Hart and Shirley Frag, the former was at her best and showed tremendous grit and power which even today is fondly remembered by the tennis lovers of the world as one of the best ever finals played at Wimbledon.

In the first set, Shirley could muster only 20 points. Doris Hart registered a convincing win in this set by 6-1. Doris was playing at full strength. She was hitting the shots so well that her rival Shirley Frag could only play from the base line. Shirley was considered to be a very fast player, but she could not match the 'service' and the 'volleys' coming from Doris Hart. Doris won two consecutive sets to register her fantastic victory in the finals that year. She required just 35 minutes to defeat a strong contender like Shirley Fray. One critic had

expressed an opinion that the tremendous confidence with which Doris had played the final game that year had no parallel in the entire history of the tournament.

The spectators applauded her victory. It was not merely a victory for getting a top world tennis trophy or a shield but also a victory for one who had faced numerous calamities, sorrow, grief and the like, one after the other during the last few years. Doris Hart was finally the Wimbledon Champion at 26 and had fulfilled her life long dream to achieve that coveted distinction.



*Doris Hart*

The account of Doris' magnificent performance does not end with her victory in the women's singles. That day she showed her grit and power further making it a golden day in her life and also in the history of lawn tennis. After a short interval, Doris Hart and Shirley Fray walked hand in hand to the court to play the ladies' doubles finals. They were to face the same pair of Los Bourge and Margaret Du Pont who had been winning the ladies' doubles finals continuously since 1948. Everybody thought that this well experienced pair of Bourge and Du Pont would easily make it to the top once again. However, Doris Hart thought otherwise. She again showed the same power and grit which had enabled her to win the ladies' singles a few minutes before. The pair of Doris

and Shirley won the first set 6-3. The spectators were stunned. During the second set the rival pair of Los and Margaret produced a powerful game. They wanted to retain their monopoly over the doubles title. But by now the spectators were on the side of Doris and Shirley and were constantly encouraging them and applauding them throughout the remaining game. The



*Doris Hart*

pair was giving a fitting reply to every shot that was hurled at them by their rivals in the tug of war going on between the two sides. At one time the score was 9 'all' (9-9), then 10-9, then 10 all, then 11-10. Thus the game was like a sea-saw game. When the two pairs were 11 all (11-11) the game had almost tilted in favour of Doris and Shirley. This pair finally won the encounter and the doubles crown, thereby defeating the pair who had held the title for the last three years. What was more noteworthy was the fact that Doris and Shirley were not in the reckoning at all to win the title before the encounter actually began that day.

After an hour or so, Doris Hart walked once again to the centre court, this time to play the mixed doubles final. Her partner in this match was Frank Sedjman of Australia and their rivals were the Australian pair of Mervyn Ross and

### *The Heart of A Champion*

Nanci Boulton. It was too much even for the ardent admirers of Doris Hart to think that she would win again in the third consecutive match on the same day. But once again she proved that nothing was impossible on this earth if only ones determination and will power are strong enough to meet the impending challenge. The mixed-doubles final encounter also becomes very tough. Doris equaled the stoic ness and strength of her male partner Frank Sedgeman and won the match in straight sets 7-5, 6-2. For the third time in a single day Hart, the victor, bowed to the crowds while leaving the court unvanquished. The crowd applauded her again, but this time the applause was three times louder, and did not end until she finally disappeared from the view of the spectators that day.

Prior to the extraordinary performance of Doris Hart in 1951, there had been instances of players winning all the three trophies in a single year. But what distinguishes her from others is the fact that no one had ever passed through the type of turmoil and challenges through which Doris had to pass through in her life. That is why her victories became more pronounced, dramatic and admirable than those of others. It was indeed most memorable. It was a golden moment too because a girl whose right leg had sustained serious injuries in her childhood, and about whom it had been predicted that she would not even be able even to walk in the future, who in that situation would have probably spent her days in remorse sitting as a dependent in some corner or the other outside the precincts of the tennis court, the same Doris Hart today had become the Empress of the tennis world by the virtue of her courage, determination and perseverance. She had notched an unbelievable mark in her life.





## The Champion of Champions

---

The event narrated here took place in Tokyo, the capital city of Japan, which had hosted the Olympics in 1964. About one hundred thousand spectators were keenly watching the discus-throw event on the 15th day of October that year. Huge television cameras were recording even the minutest details of the body movements of each and every participant. But none of the cameras was capable of recording the heartbeats that were taking place in the heart of the great discus throw competitor Al Oerter who came from New York with the United States contingent and who was working in the computer section of the Gruman Aircraft Company as an inspector. Neither the cameras that were focused on him, nor the experts or the spectators present had even an inkling of the terrible condition in which their favourite participant was competing. The entire past of the man was suggesting that Al Oerter was trying probably for the impossible. In such a fast changing world, it was considered almost impossible for anyone to obtain three consecutive Olympic gold medals in any single event. The only exception was John Flanagan of the U.S. who had won the gold in the hammer throwing event in three consecutive Olympics. But those times were quite different. Flanagan had recorded those victories in the Olympic Games held in 1900, 1904 and 1908. Those days are known in sports as the 'dark age'. The progress that was being



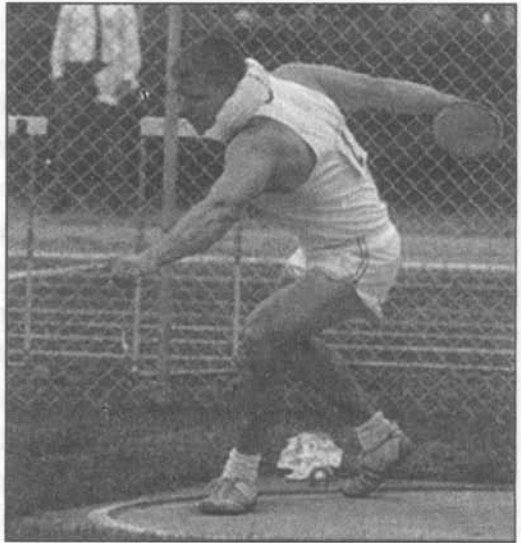
*Al Oerter*

made in games and sports then was at a very slow pace, but today when the speed of progress is very fast and if anyone thinks of repeating the performance of Flangan would be considered as a mad-cap. It would be like building castles in the air. What is more note-worthy is the fact that Al Oerter who had won the gold twice in the Olympics was not holding the world record in the discus throw event at the time of the Tokyo Olympics. The world record at the time was held by Ludwing Darrek of Czechoslovakia

who was making rapid strides, although it is also equally true that following that Oerter had registered a sensational victory in the Melbourne Olympics in the year 1956. He had not lost a single event in which he had participated thereafter confirming his good form, which only means that he was retaining his form.

Oerter was not worried about facing the select rivals. He was more worried whether his sick body would support him or not. His will power was, of course, very strong. Whenever he hurled the discus from the ring, he felt severe pain in the body. It was unbearable for him. He continued to ignore the advice of his doctors. In fact, he was not expected to participate in the 1963 Tokyo Olympics at all, if one were to go by the predictions that were made by his doctors. Just year before, he had dislocated his knee and its pain, instead of subsiding, persisted. That is why before coming to Tokyo for the Olympics, he had participated in only three other

competitions. But that was certainly not enough to emulate the achievement that was registered by John Flagnan in winning gold medals in three consecutive Olympics. What the doctors had diagnosed was that by throwing the disc weighing 2 kg. for twelve years, Oerter had damaged the vertebra of his



*Discus Thrower Oerter with a belt in the neck and in deep pain*

backbone. That is why while hurling the discus from the 8' x 2½" circle, he was feeling severe pain; whether his body supported him then or not, his mind was very firm and strong and hence his body too gave him physical support. To save him from the agony of pain, Oerter was wearing a collar made of leather around his neck that was specially designed for him so that his head did not make too many oscillations while throwing the disc. And that gave him some relief.

Prior to the Tokyo Olympics, Oerter's worries increased, because the Czech champion Damely had broken his own world record and was now looking forward to win the Olympic gold. Secondly, just six days before the Olympic event while Oerter was practicing in the Olympic village he slipped over a wet patch and cracked part of his ribs. There was internal bleeding. On examining him his doctors expressed the opinion that it would take at least six weeks for

him to recoup during which he would not be able to take part in the discus throw event. For him the Olympics was effectively over. Would that mean that his sports career had come to an end? He quietly digested the opinion expressed by his doctor, did not lose hope and confidence. He himself never thought that he would not be able to participate in the game. His only worry was whether he would be able to put up a good performance or not, a



*Discus Thrower Oerter*

performance which would be commensurate with that of a champion. He only requested his doctors to give him the best possible treatment so as to reduce the impact of the injury.

The doctors administered him the best possible treatment, including heat and ultra-sonic treatment. He was also given enzymes to remove blood clotting. The portion of his body from the chest down to the west was tied with a light bandage. The right front portion of his body, which looked like an Egyptian mummy, was put regularly under ice and he was also given strong doses of sedatives. His friends thought that now Oerter should lie down on his bed and spend his days reminiscing about past performances and nothing more. But Oerter was a man of different make and grit. His mental framework was as solid as steel. Whatever may be his difficulties or privations, he would not defy the call of the



Olympics. He would rather die than surrender. He was like the Rana Sang, the Rajput warrior who had many wounds on his body. When he actually entered the ring for the event, not many people could gauge his inner strength. He was one who had entered the final round by overcoming the performances of the best competitors from all around the world.

When the last attempts of the throw were measured by the officials, the world record holder Denarrek was leading, followed by David Will of the U.S. Oerter was ranked third then. Only the last two attempts now remained for the participants.

When Oerter entered the ring for the fifth attempt, his rivals were concerned more about this majestic competitor than anyone else. Oerter stood in the ring with full determination. He said to himself that this was an opportunity which one should not throw away and that he should gather all the strength at his command to throw the disc – a chance he may not get again in this life.

Oerter moved his hand with full strength and threw the discus which landed at a distance of 200 feet and 1½ inches. In doing so he had established a new world record for which he received tremendous applause from the spectators.

After the event, Oerter said he alone knew the pain and the agony through which he had suffered to set the new world record. His two rivals, Ludwig Darrek and David Will saluted Oerter for this magnificent achievement. They could not throw the disc beyond 200 feet in their sixth and last attempt.

When he was called upon for the final throw, Oerter only stood by the side of the officials and waved his hand signifying his victory. He now wanted to rest his body which was full of pain and agony.

### *The Champion of Champions*

After the event, Darrek conceded that his defeat was at the hands of a superman and that Oerter was the strongest and the most formidable rival he had met in his life. Darrek also said that what he learnt from Oerter on that day was that if one wanted to win the Olympic crown, one has to be prepared for the highest sacrifice.

For Oerter, difficulties and privations had become almost a way of life.



The well-known cricket all-rounder from England Wilfred Rhodes played 58 test matches, scored 2325 runs and took 127 wickets.

During his entire cricketing career spanning 32 years, he played 1528 innings in first class matches, scored 39,802 runs and took 4187 wickets.

After retiring at the age of 53 years, he lost the vision in both the eyes and yet he attended all the test matches thereafter and could say with certainty the type of stroke the batsman at the crease had played with the help of the sound from the bat.

Whenever he described the nature of the stroke to the spectators sitting near him, they would not even imagine that the 'spectator' accurately describing the shots was completely blind.



## The Bravest of The Brave

---

One can certainly do anything if one has the motivation to do it. Yogesh Gandhi of Mumbai has proven this by setting his own example.

Right from his childhood Yogesh was engulfed in calamities. He was afflicted with polio due to which both of his legs became paralysed. He was almost bed-ridden. For even small things, he depended on the help of others. But then Yogesh was not made of clay. He gradually and slowly attempted to walk, step by step with the help of calipers. He not only wanted to walk but also run. He would see his mates playing various games, the sight of which he would enjoy, more so when the encounters between them would become keen. He too desired to play like any other child of his age. But how could he do it when his legs were paralysed?

Yet Yogesh was made of sterner stuff. He resolved to participate in games. He adapted himself to the physical conditions in which he was placed without losing courage and confidence, all with a smile on his face.

Yogesh liked the game of table-tennis very much. But for a child like him it was too difficult a game to play. It required constant and quick movements at and around the table. For him that seemed almost impossible. Yet he found out a way. To avoid putting any pressure on his legs, Yogesh would hold

the table with one hand and would play the ball with the other, although this contrivance also restricted his movements. Even then he did not lose heart. He began to learn different ways in which the game could be played and started practising hard day after day. By playing just with one hand, Yogesh would tire out his opponent.

Ultimately, his efforts bore fruit. In the year 1964, the Mysore Table-tennis Association organised a 'doubles' match. In a doubles match, two participants on each side play the game as partners. Yogesh decided to participate in the event with Uday Gurjar as his partner. He astonished the spectators when they won the match. Thereafter, he recorded many such victories.



*Yogesh Gandhi*

Today Yogesh Gandhi plays the game so well that the spectators would not even realise that he is a physically challenged player and that his legs are afflicted with polio.

Such are the fruits of determination and hard work.





## Triumph Over Mind

---

In West Kansas City in the United States of America, cold breeze was blowing all around. It was winter. The morning sun was spreading its gentle rays all over the open spaces. Just then two lads were on way to their school, running fast on a dusty road. They wanted to reach school before anyone else had arrived there. They were a bit late on that day. The elder of the two, named Clyde was thirteen years of age while the younger one was only eight. Coming from a farming family, both were stoutly built. They were assigned the task of lighting the fire in the school before anyone had arrived so that the school building would be warm. Thus they wanted to make their teacher and their school mates comfortable on their arrival. That was their daily routine. They did not want anyone else to do the job. That would look bad and may even put them to shame.

Breathing hard, the two boys finally reached the school even before anyone else had arrived. First they collected a few pieces of wood and shrub and put the same in the. Glen, the younger of the two found a tin that contained some inflammable substance. Thinking that it was Kerosene, he handed it over to the elder one saying that once it was poured in the hearth and was lighted, the fire would start instantaneously. Clyde, the elder one took his brother by his

word, poured it in the fire place and lighted it with a match stick. No sooner did Clyde light it, there was a loud explosion which shook the entire school building. The window-panes and the shutters of the school building were blown to pieces. The younger one, who was caught in the smoke and was suffocating, started shouting for the elder one. But there was no response from him. The fire was raging.

Glen's eyes were badly affected; his pants and his gloves caught fire. He was screaming. By that time, other children had arrived and some of them pulled the two brothers from the fire. Clyde received severe burns all over his body that proved fatal. Glen too had suffered serious injuries. The fingers of his left leg were completely maimed. All this had happened because the tin that was brought by Glen to the fireplace contained petrol and not kerosene.

The doctor was immediately summoned. The parents of the two lads also arrived. All of them shifted the two lads to their home. While the body of Clyde was laid in the compound, Glen was being treated inside for severe burns. After some time the doctor confided to the grieving parents that the burns Glen had received on his legs were so severe that it would be futile to hope that he would be able to walk again. Hearing this, the mother of the two boys was completely shattered. The doctor, however, consoled them and exhorted them to have faith in God who alone would be able to help Glen in his future life.

For months, Glen was given medical treatment including physiotherapy. The parents used to massage his legs daily. After months of treatment, Glen's legs started developing new skin. His otherwise dead and stiff muscles also started

showing life.

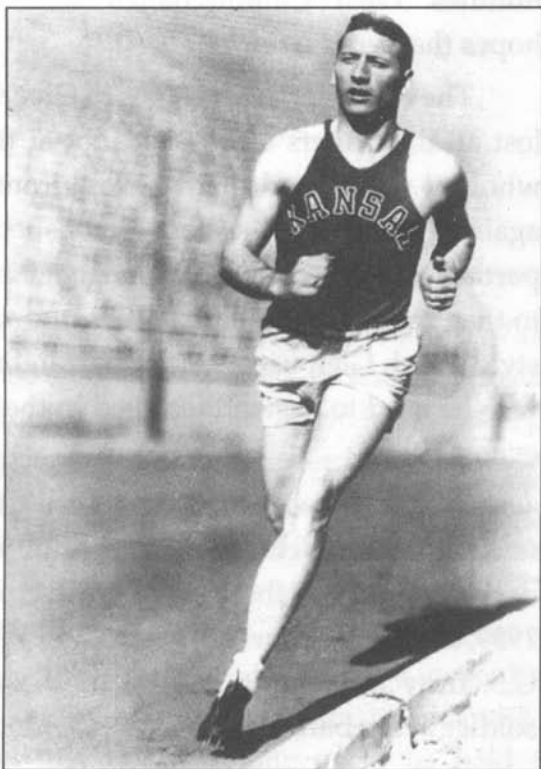
All these months, lying on his bed, Glen would reassure himself that one day he would be able to walk again like any other normal child of his age. So strong was his confidence. Everyone around including his parents knew the torment Glen was going through. But none had probably realised the strength of his willpower and his grit.

It took about two years to put new life in to Glen's otherwise stiff and almost dead muscles. Gradually with some support or the other Glen started standing on his feet. This was followed after some days by his efforts to walk bit by bit, taking in the process the support of the family plough whenever it lay idle in the compound.

One evening while Glen was making such efforts to walk, his doctor arrived who first reprimanded the boy for taking such untimely and unwarranted risks. Nonetheless, when the doctor examined Glen, he was astonished beyond words to find new life and vigour in the muscles of the boy. He rushed inside the house almost shouting full throat, "miracle, and miracle! What I actually saw just now was something beyond my comprehension." He then patted Glen to say, "Bravo! You have made possible something which otherwise was thought to be impossible by everyone else. It was a victory of the tremendous efforts that you have put into it. If you continue to do the same in the days to come, your legs will receive a new lease of life and will be full of vigour."

Glen followed his doctor's advice to the hilt. He would run while doing any piece of work – small or big. He would do the same thing while going to school or playing with his play-mates.

Gradually his muscles started gathering strength. He participated in a one mile race his school had organised and taking everyone by surprise, he won it, although he was still limping. He took only 4 minutes and 24.7 seconds to cover the stipulated distance. Thus Glen had left behind the tragedy he had met with in school, together with the resulting torment.



*Fastest runner Glen Cunningham*

This very lad who had lost all the fingers on his left foot had proved to be the fastest runner in the United States of America. He did this after 19 years from the date on which he had met with the accident in school. In 1934 he participated in a race organised by Kansas University and won it by establishing a new record. Two years later he stood second in the 1500 meter race in the Berlin Olympics and secured the silver medal. He covered the distance in 3 minutes and 48.4 seconds. Again, in 1938 he took part in a one mile race and established a record which stood intact for years thereafter. He could achieve this at a time when it was thought impossible for a young man to cover the distance of one mile in less than 4



minutes. Glen Cunningham's achievements created new hopes the world over.

The credit for all this goes to Glen Cunningham who had lost all the fingers on his left foot at the age of 8 and about whom it was feared that he would not be able even to walk again. The records he had established were a challenge to participants the world over for a long time to come. In addition to that, many prominent runners, the world over adopted the style which Glen used to take part in the track events and the way he used to hasten the speed in the last leg of the running events.

In studies too as in sports, Glen Cunningham recorded a few significant achievements. He obtained M.A. and Ph.D. degrees and held the post of a director in the University. In 1939, during the course of the Second World War, he joined the U.S. army and fought for his country for seven long years as a soldier at the battle front.

On being relieved from the armed forces, he purchased a big farm in his native state in America and out of its income opened an abode for the physically challenged in which 8000 such children were trained for making themselves independent and self-reliant.

Glen Cunningham thus became an ideal for others to emulate.



## Let Everest Beckons

---

This is the story of a Russian athlete named Valery Brumel. Ever since man became civilised, he has tried to jump above his own height. It has been done many times in the past by different sports people, but never, never by such a margin as was done by the Soviet high-jumper Valery Brumel. In doing so, he became the uncrowned King of Soviet sports, particularly of the high jump athletic event. On July 21, 1963 he set a new world high-jump record of 7 ft. and 5¾ inches and thereby he cleared his own height of 6 ft. and 07/8 inches by 16 inches. The world record set by him came during a Soviet-US athletic summit meeting. For five long years he held this record that no one could break. He was not one who would feel satisfied just in retaining the record created by him. Instead, he went on establishing newer and newer records every time he participated in the high jump event.

At the age of eighteen, he had surprised everyone by jumping as high as 7 ft. and 1¼ inches in the 1960 world Olympics held in Rome. His compatriot Robert Shevlatze too had reached that height. Thereafter, on 18th July 1961, Brumel cleared the height of 7 ft. and 4 inches, setting yet another world record. The July 1963 record set by him, which was mentioned earlier, was the sixth consecutive record in his name.\*

---

\* It was in 1971 that this record was broken by the U.S. athlete P. Matzdorfe who established a new record then.

In the year 1964, Brumel won the gold in the Tokyo Olympics. The achievements that stood in the name of Brumel amazed the world. It was indeed a result of the combination of three things in him, namely, the physical strength, scientific training and unique style. Wherever Brumel went, whether it was his country or the U.S. or any other, he received great applause from the lovers of athletics.



*Valery Brumel*

The beauty of sporting events is that they instantly dissolve any animosity between participating countries of the world and make them long time friends. They also result in bestowing honours on the athletes of different countries irrespective of the country to which the athlete belongs. For instance, Brumel who belonged to the Soviet Union was honoured by no less a country than the U.S. when he was awarded the 'John F Kennedy Memorial Gold Medal'. It is well known that the Soviet Union and the U.S. had been arch enemies in world politics for a long time.

But no one, be he an athlete or one belonging to any other sphere of human activity, enjoys a secular career graph. There are ups and downs, happiness or sorrow. The cycle goes on revolving round such phases. The same thing happened to Brumel at a time when he was at the peak of his athletic career. On the night of October 5, 1965, when he was riding on the pillion of a friend's motorbike, the rider lost control in an underpass and crashed. Brumel was knocked off unconscious.

The entire weight of the heavy vehicle fell on his right leg, almost crushing the bones. On regaining consciousness after a while, he saw a lump of flesh and white bone sticking out of his right knee. He had suffered two fractures below the knee and a multiple fractures of the ankle. Initially the doctors thought of amputating the leg, but on more careful and lengthy considerations postponed the idea for a while and instead decided to operate the leg first and to examine its effects. The operation went on for five long hours. Unfortunately the effort of the doctors did not succeed. Brumel's foot had to be amputated. This meant that Brumel had to live the rest of his life at the mercy of the wheel chair or crutches. To think that Brumel could return to the playground that was like building castles in the air.



*Wounded Valery Brumel*

For three long years his right foot was in and out of plaster casts. During this period, he had to undergo six operations one after the other, of course with intermittent intervals in between. For most of that time he walked on crutches or used a wheel chair. In between, a prominent medical body examined his case at length and finally concluded that Brumel would not be able to return to the high jump arena during his life time. It was, as if, the end of the world for him. Even his fellow athletes and coaches thought so. A normal person would have been lucky just to walk

properly again. But Brumel, with the mettle of which he was moulded, swore that he would not only walk like a normal person but would get back to high-jumping and that too in competitive encounters. The reaction of most knowledgeable persons, including experts, to Brumel's resolve was one of pessimism, so much so that the November 1968 issue of the British Olympic Association's official mouth-piece the 'World Sports' carried the following write-up by the well known sports critic Neil Allen :

'Valery is thinking of returning to sports competitions on recovery. But it appears beyond ones comprehension. It smacks of excessive exuberance.'

Thus everyone thought that Brumel would never return to the high-jump event. But there was one person, and one person alone who thought otherwise and that was none other than Valery Brumel himself.

It took Valery weeks to regain his balance and learn to walk again, though with slow and cautious steps. Once his leg was strong again, he started undergoing training exercises in and outside his home. But it was not the same. It appeared as if the greatest high-jumper in the history of the event would never get back to his old-time peak.

Just then Valery received a letter from an unknown sports fan who asked him to consult a surgeon named Gavarill Ilizarow of the town of Kurgan who had developed an expertise to stretch the bone of the foot by 6-8 inches. He had elaborated on an original method of healing the injured limbs that was confirmed as sound method after years of practice. After spending a sleepless night, Brumel went to the doctor the very next morning. On May 26, 1968 the doctor performed yet another operation on Valery which lasted a full one hour. The operation proved successful. The result was that Brumel's

right leg was stretched further by a few inches. Good news indeed ! The 26 year old Soviet athlete then started not only walking normally but resumed his high-jump training with a confident resolve to return to competitive encounters. And yet his adversaries would not give in. Now they started saying that even if he walks runs or plays basket-ball a bit, high-jumping for him was next to impossible.

In November 1968, Brumel was assured by Dr. Ilizarow that the bone of his injured right leg would never break again at least, in the place where he had originally developed fractures in the road accident. A



*Brumel breaking his own record*

month later, in December, Brumel possibly the only person in the world then – who nourished a strong hope for his comeback to the high-jump event, held his first workout. Successive practice sessions followed thereafter. He never bothered about what others said about his resolve to come back to the arena. No one, he thought, could prevent him from staging the impending return to the sport.

Initially when he started walking again he used to limp. Then he would push or thrust himself either on the ground or on snow for one kilometer or so. He also started lifting dumbbells weighing 10 kg. Gradually he started regaining strength and confidence either by running or by swimming or by doing various kinds of physical exercises.

On 12th March 1969, the day of his redemption finally arrived when he was to prove his mettle again and astonish everyone. On that day in the young Pioneers Indoor Stadium in Moscow, the capital city of the USSR, Brumel started jumping with the same style and prowess with which he used to jump before the accident. He jumped eighteen times successively. Every time the height was being raised. He finally attained the height of two meters, thereby fulfilling his long cherished desire. His happiness knew no bounds. In the past he had established world records and also broke the records he himself had established. But never was he as happy as he was today. This had put a positive stamp on his glorious comeback. Seeing his last hit, a correspondent wrote, 'We have seen a miracle with our own eyes today, a miracle that was the culmination of unending courage and a very strong willpower.'

His 2 meter high jump on that day was by no means an ordinary one. He was only 9 cm. behind the height that was achieved that day by Valentin Garvilov, Valery's compatriot and the reigning European Champion. It was true that Garvilov had won the event, but Valery Brumel who stood second got the same applause and respect that were in store for the winners.

In the spring of 1970, Brumel again sustained a serious injury. This time it was the muscle of the left foot knee that was involved. In such cases, the participant gives up and retires from the event permanently. This is because the competitor has to undergo complicated operations to be normal again. For Valery Brumel, everything except high jump could be sacrificed.

For the sake of his love for the sport, Brumel had voluntarily undergone a series of operations, some of them

major lasted for hours at a time and during which he was put under anesthesia. On 25th March 1970, he was operated upon for an injury to his left foot and yet he presented himself on the ground for high-jump by the fall of the same year.

Valery Brumel has proven by setting his own example that if one is firm and determined to do a something, if one's willpower is strong enough to pass through all kinds of difficulties and privations, nothing is impossible in this world. His phenomenal comeback to the high-jump event in world competitions after sustaining serious injuries is in itself a big achievement for him, than his setting world records.



While marathon race is becoming more and more popular in the world these days, some 1600 participants took part in the second marathon race in 1984 in very severe cold conditions. It was flagged off from the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi.

Those who participate in such events for fun run a few meters from the start and then leave the rest of the race for the serious contenders.

Like the first marathon, this second marathon was also won by Satish who was a government servant. He covered a distance of 21 km. just in 1 hour 9 minutes and 8 seconds.

Satish has been deaf and dumb from birth and his right eye also did not work. Yet nobody could obstruct his marathon eagerness in participating in the marathon race.





## Sweet Are The Uses of Adversity

---

Difficulties or calamities never come alone. They have a tendency to march together like an army. That is precisely what happened in the case of E. Pitambaran Pavitran hailing from the tiny state of Kerala. He faced one storm after another in his otherwise happy life.

He was a native of Addor village located in the Queelone district of the state. While he was studying in the Calicut Engineering College, he was known for his intellectual prowess. After completing his studies there, he joined the Indian Armed Forces. During the Bangladesh War of 1971, he held the rank of a Naik in the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Corps of the Indian Army. Being highly efficient, he was judged to be the best electrician of the E.M.E. in 1971. He was at the top of his unit.

Just then a calamity befell Pavitran. While he was on duty at the battle-front riding a motorbike, he was hit by an enemy bullet. As the motorcycle turned turtle, he was badly thrown off. One of his legs was crushed under the impact of the accident, while his right hand received serious injuries as well. He was brought to a military hospital in an unconscious state.

Pavitran had to undergo a major operation. During which one of his legs was amputated from the hip. A steel rod had to be inserted in his right hand. When he regained consciousness, he was literally shaken to find himself in such a state of health. The injuries sustained by him were of a very serious nature.

It was the second calamity which completely shattered Pavitrán mentally. His wife died suddenly, leaving behind two little children in the care of the father. Pavitrán was now a shattered man.

When he reported for duty in his EME unit, he was declared unfit to work as a technician. All his efforts at persuasion fell on the deaf ears of his superiors. He felt desolated.

But Pavitrán was made of stronger stuff and not the kind to lose heart even in the face of such calamities. He made a firm resolve that he would prove to the whole world that he was not a 'limping horse.'

He bought an artificial leg and got it fitted with the help from medical technicians. He then started practicing to walk little by little. By this time, he came across a news item announcing a cycle rally between Pune and Kanyakumari passing through 21 states of the country and covering a distance of 24,000 km. leading competitors was to participate from all over the country. The distance to be covered was vast and not one of the participants was confident of completing it.

Pavitrán decided to enter the fray. After all, once upon a time he too was a soldier and he had not lost his inner strength. Many of his relatives and friends tried to dissuade him from participating in such a long rally and that too with an artificial foot. A few of them laughed it off as a big joke while others called it an attempt to build castles in the air. But Pavitrán remained firm in his resolve.

But mere determination, howsoever strong it may have been, would not be enough on its own. Pavitrán had to have a specially designed and manufactured bicycle for the race, and this entailed fairly large expenditure. When he approached a

few manufacturers, none was prepared to believe that a person with one artificial leg could win, nay - even participate in such a long distance rally. Every manufacturer, therefore, expressed his unwillingness to manufacture a bicycle suited for his special purpose.

Pavitrans did not lose heart. Being an engineer by profession and having experience from the Indian army, he decided to manufacture a bicycle himself by collecting the necessary spare parts from different sources. In the course of time, he succeeded in creating a bicycle that would suit his requirement.

The cycle rally was finally flagged off from Pune on 12th October 1982. In all 33 competitors were trying their luck among whom Pavitrans was the only physically challenged participant. All others were able bodied. And yet Pavitrans completely disowned the idea that he had any physical deficiency or that he had an artificial limb. The only thing that he kept in his mind was the target of 24,000 km. that he had resolved to cover.

One of the regions through which the participants were to pass was the Chambal valley in Madhya Pradesh, which was known to be infested with dreaded dacoits. In any event the entire terrain through which river Chambal flowed was a difficult one to cross so that even the bravest of the braves would shudder at the prospect of crossing it. But as far as Pavitrans was concerned, even though his body was no doubt made of flesh and blood like any other human being, his mind seemed to be made of steel. His entire concentration was focussed on successfully crossing the distance from Pune to Kanyakumari on his bicycle and to win the race.

When Pavitrans was crossing the Chambal valley, he was challenged by a group of dacoits at an isolated place. He stood

unruffled. The dacoits found to their surprise that he was carrying no weapons so there was no chance of an encounter between them. The dacoits came closer to him and started snatching everything that Pavitrán had with him. What could Pavitrán or any other person in his place do in such a situation? While this was going on, Phoolan Devi, the leader of the dacoit gang, arrived on the scene. She was the most dreaded person in the entire Chambal valley. The queen of the dacoits was amazed to find that Pavitrán was all alone and was trying to cross the region unarmed, without any fear. In an authoritative tone, she asked Pavitrán about the purpose of his visit to that dangerous area. Pavitrán explained to her everything and also pointed to the artificial foot he was wearing. On hearing patiently all that Pavitrán had told her, she ordered her men to return all the things they had looted from him and said a few words of appreciation for the courage and confidence Pavitrán had shown in undertaking the odyssey. In addition, she also offered Rs. 200 to him as a reward, and that she thrust into his pockets because he refused to accept it.

He came across similar incidents elsewhere throughout his journey. On an average, he was covering a distance of 300 km. every day and while passing through 21 states of the Indian Union, he completed the entire distance of 24,000 km, in a total of 58 days. He was the only competitor who successfully completed the full distance. Others could not complete even 12,000 km.

Everyone who came to know about Pavitrán's achievement was simply flabbergasted. When he announced his future plans to undertake a worldwide tour on bicycle, many manufacturers started competing with each other to offer him a bicycle for that project and that too without any

consideration. Pavitrn had proved that if one is firm in one's resolve, one can achieve anything in this world by surmounting all kinds of difficulties and privations.

Later Pavitrn joined the paratroopers in the Indian army. He proved to be the only physically challenge soldier in the unit who could take a jump from a plane flying high in the skies. His name was included in the Guinness Books of Records for his unique achievements as a paratrooper. The Government of India also honoured him by bestowing on him the coveted Arjun Award.

Pavitrn was not one to spend his time gloating over his past achievements. He did not like to sit idle and do nothing. He started dreaming of new plans and projects. He participated in he 20,000 km. cycle race that was organised in the city of Ottawa in Canada with courage and confidence greater than those who had a normal physique. He established a new record of covering a distance of 600 kms in a period of just 24 hours.

Pavitrn would not stop doing such things again and again. He was always ready to undertake new adventures. He even jumped into the Niagara Falls, using rubber devices. He now wants to jump into the same fall without any safety devices. He often says, "If I remain alive after the attempt, it would be the greatest achievement of my life time, but if I die Niagara Falls will become my permanent grave. Both ways I shall be the winner."





## The Brave Olympian

---

Robert, alias Bob B. Mathias, created history by winning the gold consecutively for two years in one of the most difficult events in the Olympics, namely, the decathlon, in which each competitor has to take part in ten different events. Not an easy thing indeed ! More importantly, he was the first athlete in the entire history of the Olympic Games to have recorded this achievement.

But would you believe, even for a moment that in his childhood Bob had always been a sickly boy? He had an extremely weak physique and a pale body. He could not even sit properly till the age of 12. He had to be treated with radioactive rays. After every meal, he had to take rest. At the age of 14, his height was 5 ft. and 10 in. He was so weak that he could not participate in any school games. Instead, he used to play a trumpet or a bugle in the school band.

Bob's father was a doctor and a good football player too. He did not like his son being so weak and sickly.

One day Bob got annoyed with the fact that he was so weak and unhealthy. He decided to throw the sickness out once and for all and instead to become healthy and strong. He realised that as long as he was weak, no one would take note of him. That was the way the world acted towards such miserable creatures. He, therefore, decided to build his body. He started doing various kinds of physical exercises under the

guidance of his parents. In the next three years he achieved a complete transformation of his body. At the age of 17, Bob with a height of 6 ft. and 2 in. and weighing 190 lb. became a strong young man. He started playing football and basketball regularly. No one now looked at him with pity. On the contrary he became a model of fitness in his school.

In 1948, Bob's physical instructor Vergil Jackson asked him to try his hand at the athletic event called the decathlon. He was more



*Bob Mathias*

than eager for such an opportunity although prior to that he had never taken part in events like the pole vault, long distance run, javelin throw or high jump. And yet when his coach commanded him to try the decathlon, he did not fight shy. He tried it with all the strength he could muster and succeeded in it, so much so that, in the next few months he registered many victories. His achievements were so glaring that he was selected to participate in the 1948 Olympics as a member of the U.S. team for the most difficult event of the games, namely, the decathlon. He was only 17 years of age then. No one else in the history of the U.S. had obtained the distinction of representing their country at such a young age.

All Olympic events are very keenly fought. There is neck and neck competition in each one of them. And Bob had to participate in one of the most difficult and tiresome events. Each participant in the event had to play the role of the entire team. It included, among other things, running, jumping, throwing and seven other disciplines. On the first day it

included a 100 metre run, long jump, shot put, high jump and a 400 metre race. On the second day, the participating athletes had to take part in the 110 metre obstacle race, discus throw, pole vault, javelin throw and 1500 metre race irrespective of any consideration of physical fitness. Further, it also included boxing, swimming etc. According to the rules, all these events had to be completed within a period of two days only, even if it meant extending the playing period into late hours. Hence when a player completes one event he goes straight into the next without a pause. No special credits are given to forestall a rival competitor but credits are obtained by getting closer and closer to the world records. When a single mistake is committed even in one of the ten events, the entire effort loses value.

On 5th of August 1948 Bob Mathias entered the decathlon event at the London Olympics. He did not have any training or experience in pole vault or javelin throw before just three months of the London encounter. A select band of participants from twenty countries were completing in the event. The competition began on the dot at 10-00 in the morning and continued till 8-00 p.m. in the evening. When he returned to the Olympic village, he was rated third among the world competitors. He could not sleep that night, even though he felt very tired.

Next day turned out to be the most unfortunate one in the long history of the Olympics. It was raining heavily and there was fog everywhere. The grounds were littered with mud and mire. Bob remained on the ground continuously for twelve hours. When raining, he would cover himself with a blanket and when his turn came, he would throw it away and participate as per the schedule. By the time the javelin throw event was called, there was complete darkness on the grounds, so much so that lights had to be provided on the starting line.



The 1500 metre race was still pending. It began after 10-00 pm. To the pleasant surprise of most of the spectators who were still present on the field, Bob Mathias won the event. This 17 year old lad became the greatest and the most versatile sports person of the world.



*Bob Mathias : A Multifaceted Genius*

No one could imagine then that Bob would again appear as a competitor just four years later at the next Olympic meet that was to be held in Helsinki, the capital of Finland, in 1952. To the astonishment of all, Bob was again there to participate in the same event. But this time while he was taking the long jump, he strained the muscle of his right leg. When that happens to anyone, it should mean the end of the competition for the participant. Everyone thought that Bob would surely retire, particularly when many competitors were still there to follow. His coach too thought likewise; and said to Bob, "My dear, do you really think, you will be able to continue in the event?"

Bob went near him, put his hand on his shoulder and said, "Don't worry at all. I still think I shall be able to continue."

Despite the strained muscle, Bob Mathias not only

completed the events but, again won the gold. He was the first competitor who had won the gold in two successive Olympics. The other who emulated Bob was Daly Thomson of England who won the gold Medal successively in the 1980 and 1984 Olympics.



Parul Parmar of Gandhinagar in Gujarat is polio-stricken and yet she has proved her mettle as an ace badminton player at the National and International levels. The game of badminton requires fast-paced movements of the legs and Parul is afflicted with Polio and yet she plays with agility and speed of an accomplished player. She has won more than forty gold medals at the national and international competitions.

During her childhood, she fell ill and the temperature shot up to 105 degree. The doctor gave her an injection which caused paralysis in her right leg. She was advised physiotherapy for an hour and a half every day. A friend of his father Dalsukhbhai suggested playing badminton in lieu of physiotherapy and she won her first gold medal when she was in std. 7. In 2002, at the age of twelve, she became the state champion. Later she learnt that there were competitions for physically challenged too. In 2002 she participated in All India Rajiv Gandhi Memorial Tournament for the physically challenged and won gold medals in women's singles and mixed doubles. She was, then, selected to participate in Badminton for Disabled World Cup organised in India and on her birthday she won two gold medals. This signaled her entry into Asian Paraplegic competition in Malaysia and earned for herself gold medals in singles, doubles and mixed doubles. Parul, the indefatigable, got a job in the postal department and the committed employee won badminton championship seven times for the department. Once she visited Israel and there the female players could not make it for the competition owing to war and the organisers told her that she could compete with the male players if she wished. She, without batting her eyelids, accepted the challenge and won a silver medal in mixed doubles.



## The Crippled Who Ran The fastest

---

The World Olympic Games were held in Italy's capital city of Rome in the year 1960. As the games were in progress in different stadium's and on different grounds, there was a sudden commotion accompanied by a loud applause on the venue where track events were being held. The commotion and applause were for Wilma Rudolf of the U.S. who had won a third gold in the running events in the same Olympics. She ran nine times and in all the nine races, she was the first to reach the finishing line. The entire sports world was amazed at her magnificent achievement. This twenty year old runner had overpowered some of the most outstanding participants representing various countries of the world who had sent their best athletes for each event, including the running competitions.

But there lies an interesting and yet a stunning tale behind the victory of this brave girl. The same Wilma who was today acclaimed as the fastest runner of the world, was not even able even to walk in her childhood. She left the precincts of her home for the first time to join her playmates when she was eight years old. Till then she was confined to her bed.

Wilma Rudolph's tale begins something like this. She was born into a poor family. Her father was twice married and she was his seventeenth child and a premature one. She had weighted only 2.04 kg. at birth, a tender and a weak child indeed. At the age of 4, she was afflicted with polio and her left

### *The Crippled Who Ran The Fastest*

leg was severely affected and was paralysed. She was unable to put her foot on the floor. Such a child needs nourishment, which her poor parents with an army of children to feed, could not afford. She lived on medicines and coarse food. There was deprivation in the family. The doctors had prescribed massaging as a treatment, but the physiotherapy centre was 45 miles away from her home. She used to be taken to the



*Wilma Rudolf*

centre only once a week by her mother. This continued almost for two years. In between, her mother trained three of her other daughters in massaging and they alternately gave Wilma the required treatment, crudely though.

All children of Wilma's age would go out of homes for fun and play every day, but the crippled Wilma had to content herself lying on bed all the time and watch others play through a window of her home. Every moment she wondered if she too would ever be able to enjoy such games. To add to polio, Wilma was struck by double pneumonia and scarlet fever too. This made her not only weak but also dependent.

When Wilma was six-year old, she was given special type of boots to wear. With their help, she started walking a little, initially in the precincts of her home. But after a year she started going out on her own. The first day she went out, her happiness knew no bounds. She continued to make progress bit by bit. At the age of eight, she started walking without

wearing these special boots but she was not satisfied with this progress. She had the urge to play and make fun like any other child of her age. Nevertheless, at the age of 11, she started playing basket ball and at the age of 15 she was selected for the team to represent her state in this game.

Once Edward Temple, the physical and games instructor of her school, was asked to select a team of runners from among the school children. He selected Wilma as well as other team-mates. Soon this basketball player became famous as a runner too.

In the year 1956, the World Olympic Games were organised in the city of Melbourne in Australia. Wilma participated in them but could not succeed in any event, facing the battery of experienced competitors. Yet she was not disappointed by her performance. She had inherited some good qualities from her mother, one of which was to work hard.

Thereafter Wilma went on facing one difficulty or the other. In the year 1957, no competitions were held so that that year proved to be a lean year for her. In 1958, she fell ill. In the year 1959 the All American Games and Sports were held in which she participated in spite of a strained muscle and won first position in the 100 metre-race.

She then went to participate in the World Olympic Games held in Rome in the year 1960. She was only 20 years, two months and 16 days in age then. She was suffering from tonsillitis during those days but her prowess did not prevent her from winning one gold medal after another, her total tally being three gold medals in the games. By winning the gold in the 100 metres race, she became the fastest runner in the world. That was followed by a gold medal in the 200 metres race and then a third gold in the 4 X 100 relay race. Thus she became the queen of the Olympic Games. She had not only won the gold

*The Crippled Who Ran The Fastest*



*Wilma Rudolph*

medals but had also set new records.

A girl, who at the age of 8 was even unable to walk, became the Speed Queen of the world at the age of 20.



## A Man of Grit And Determination

---

This is the story of a person whose luck had never favoured him yet by his sheer indomitable spirit, he always turned the tables of fortune in his favour.

From his childhood, he was very fond of the game of cricket. Twisting his arm, he used to deliver the ball in such a way that the only thing the batsman faced was that his stumps were uprooted and the batsman was clean bowled.

When he was just seven years of age, his right hand suffered a stroke of paralysis. As a result of the disease he could not even move his hand in the beginning. It was only after undergoing a long treatment that he could use his right hand for day to day routine work.

His liking for the game of cricket was so great that he would be prepared to sacrifice anything. During the time his right hand was paralysed and could not be used for bowling, he started keeping wickets. He could use only his left hand for collecting the ball or for throwing it from behind the wickets. This continued for four long years till he attained the age of twelve.

He, then, started playing for the National School of Bangalore where he was a student. While keeping wickets, he used to observe minutely the movements of the hand of the bowler and the spin of the ball, which he delivered. Then he would himself copy the same action behind the wickets. Gradually he started developing a fancy for bowling which he

thought was more enjoyable than keeping wickets.

Once it so happened that his school was playing a match with another school. The match had reached a crucial point at and his school was facing the prospect of a certain defeat. The rival team needed only a few more runs to register a victory. It still had a few batsmen waiting for their turn to bat.



*Bhagwat Chandrashekhar*

At such a crucial time, the wicket-keeper of the team that was facing defeat requested the captain to hand over the bowling to him. What he said to the captain was, 'Look, either way we are losing the match. Why not allow me to try bowling?' The captain saw some point in what the wicket-keeper was saying and conceded his request on the condition that he would be allowed to bowl only one over.

The wicket-keeper justifiably thought that if he were to bowl only one over, why not deliver the six balls with the right hand? It was paralysed now, but it was the same hand with which he had bowled prior to the disease he was afflicted with ! The wicket-keeper turned bowler delivered the first ball of the over that was allotted to him. It was a yorker.\* The batsman at the crease could not even see the ball, nor could he judge its speed. The result was that his middle stump was uprooted. The bowler then started delivering the remaining balls with his polio affected right hand with such a speed that the bowler himself was perplexed at it. The wickets of the rival team started tumbling one after the other. The team which at one point was at the threshold of certain defeat turned the tables

---

\* It is a ball which is pitched at or very near the batting crease.



and won the match. This was simply because of the magic spell of bowling by none other than its wicket-keeper turned bowler.

The bowler himself was amazed at the speed with which he could deliver the balls. More than that was the astonishment that he felt about the way his polio affected right hand did the magic on that day. The players of the rival team too were flabbergasted by the way the wicket-keeper turned-bowler bowled the magical spell to win the match.

The bowler concerned was none other than India's master spinner Bhagwat Subramaniam Chandrashekhar. As a member of the Indian cricket team this very Chandrashekhar had carved a permanent place in the history of the world of cricket by his mysterious and magical spin bowling. During the time he was a member of the Indian team, he was considered to be a 'Brahmastra', a weapon that was a curse for the rival teams. On 23rd August 1971, he had taken six important wickets of the English team on English soil by conceding only 38 runs in the process and helped register the first ever victory in a test match for India against England, thereby ushering a new era in Indian Cricket. England had never faced such an ignominious defeat in the entire 39 year history of the test encounters between India and England. During 1972-73 when the English team was touring India, Chandrashekhar registered yet another landmark by capturing 100 wickets in his cricketing career. He even surpassed the record, set by Vinoo Mankad and Subhash Gupta, of capturing the highest number of wickets (34) against England by capturing 35 wickets with an average of 1891 runs.

In a single Ranji Trophy season at home, Chandrashekhar had the distinction of claiming 55 wickets with an average of 16 runs. In the 1976 match which India won against the West Indies on their soil, Chandrashekhar completed 150 wickets of

his test career and became India's fourth bowler to do so next only to Vinoo Mankad, E. S. Prasanna and Bishensingh Bedi. He was the eighth Indian player whose name found a place in Wisden in 1971. He was given the Arjun Award in 1972.



*Bhagwat Chandrashekhar*

Chandrashekhar had deceived some of the best batsmen of the world by combining his leg breaks, googly and top spin deliveries. His bowling was so tricky and devastating that even the top batsman like Sunil Gavaskar conceded that he (Gavaskar) could judge his googly all right, but as far as his other deliveries were concerned he used to face them only with prayers on his lips ! Chandrashekhar's deliveries used to acquire such a speed after being pitched at the crease that many considered him a medium pace bowler. Vivian Richards of the West Indies on tour of India in the year 1976 was credited with saying that Chandrashekhar's deliveries were as speedy as those of the Australian fast bowler Thompson. Thus Chandrashekhar had put so much power and force in his paralysis-affected right hand that even the best batting teams of the world used to suffer the strokes of paralysis, so to say, while facing him ! Looking at his right hand, one wonders how he had taken 242 wickets in 58 test matches by sending just 15,963 deliveries ! Fantastic indeed !



## The Fighter Par Excellence

---

It was in 1965 that India was fighting a war imposed on her by an aggressive neighbour, namely Pakistan. The war had entered a crucial phase and both sides were using all their might to defeat the other. The casualties were mounting on both sides. The Indian army contingents had encircled Lahore, an important city in Pakistan and were keeping a watch on yet another town of theirs, namely, Sialkot. The battle of Lahore was going to be decisive. The brave Indian soldiers were trying their best to capture both these strategically important towns. If the fall of Lahore to the Indian army would have meant cutting off the nose of the enemy, the capture of Sialkot by the Indian armed forces would have been tantamount to beheading the enemy.

The Pakistani forces increased their pressure on Sialkot. The Indian forces prepared themselves to give the enemy a fitting retaliation. Both faced each other in a 'do or die' situation. The enemy had deployed large forces on both fronts and their military hardware too was ample. The Patton tanks provided to Pakistan by the Americans were waging a battle against India. The Saber Jets were roaring in the sky. Pakistani forces had also deployed the Napalm bombs.

While the guns were booming, bullets being spread all around, and the planes were hurling bombs from the skies, a brave Indian soldier Murli had taken up a position on the

Indian side and was not prepared to budge even an inch. He was prepared to make the supreme sacrifice for his nation. His passion to fight the war and to win it was so great that no one could turn him away from his determination. Every strategy and tactic employed by the Pakistani forces had failed in their attempt to cow down the Indian forces. This brave lad of India, Murli, was advancing further and further on the Sialkot front along with his contingent. He was killing every enemy who came within the range of his gun. Just then, an enemy bullet hit him from behind and pierced him from the back. He remained completely unruffled and continuing his advance killed a few more soldiers of the enemy. By this time a second enemy bullet hit him on his waist. Even then he remained calm and composed as if nothing had happened. But when the third bullet pierced his leg he started stumbling. He was bleeding profusely with a pool of blood beside him. He fell down and became unconscious.

The Indian soldiers who were following him from behind lifted him in a critical condition and posted him to a military hospital where he underwent long treatment for his wounds. He was saved, but unfortunately he lost both of his legs. He was permanently maimed.

By the time he was discharged from the hospital, he realised that he could no longer walk erect or run. He could no longer frighten the enemy, nor could he fight any more for the cause of the motherland. More than that, his dream to become a good sportsman had been dashed and he was completely shattered.

Murli, who was born at Islamapur in the Sangli district of Maharashtra, could not erase from his memory an event that had occurred in his childhood. He and his friends had once gone to attend a fair. While taking a stroll there, he came across a place where he saw a wrestling duel going on between some

athletes. What he saw there was that the athletes were game with each other, each one trying to overpower the other in a physical bout. Murli's body was then rigorously trained for such physical bouts. He was fond of sports too. The physical instructor of his school C. B. Deshpande had given him sufficient training to participate with proficiency in various games and sports. He also thought of having a few bouts with athletes who were present there. Being eager to do so, Murli rushed to the manager and said, "I wish to participate in wrestling bouts. Please give me a chance."

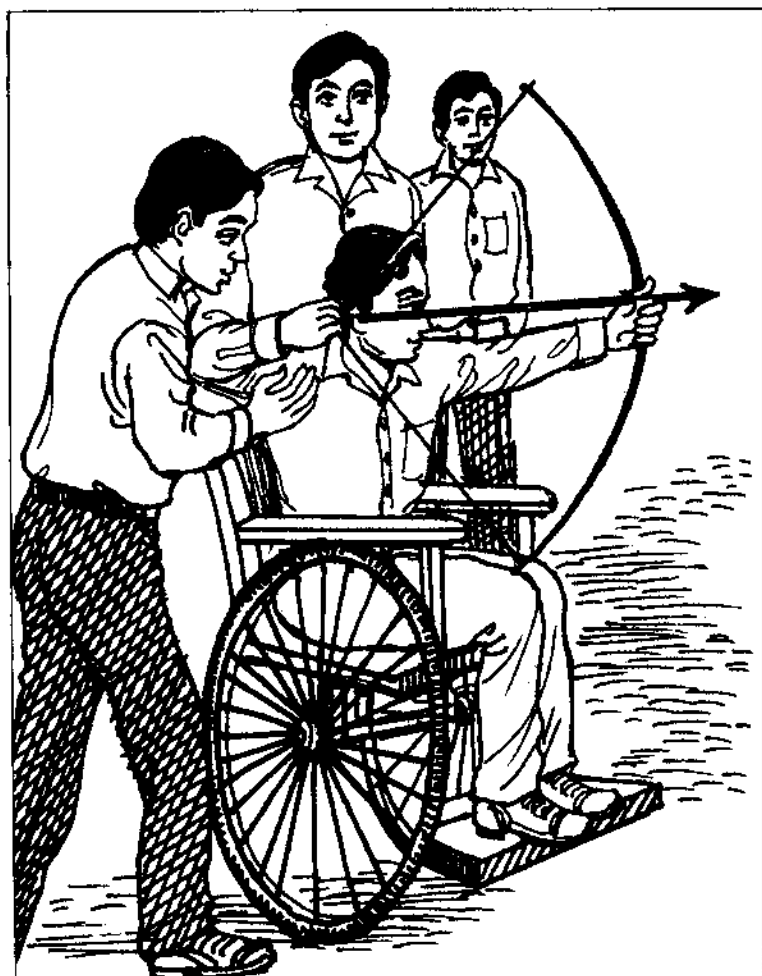
The manager looking at Murli said, "Being a dumpy, you want to take part in wrestling which is a sport for older boys and men ! It is not for short ones like you. Better go home and come back after a few years when you are older."

The little Murli was visibly annoyed at what the manager had said to him on that day. He vowed to become an able sportsman soon and thereby bring a good name to the country.

Murli had already brought a good name to the nation as a devoted and valiant soldier on the battlefield, but now he had lost both of his legs. When he was unable even to walk, the question of his becoming a sportsman was too far-fetched an idea. He was now to lead his remaining life with the support of a wheel chair. The rest was sheer fantasy.

Even then Murli did not lose heart. He thought that even though his legs could no longer help to fulfil his one time ambition to be a sportsman, there were other avenues which he could think of. A determined human being can safely overcome even a dense forest. Nothing is difficult for a person who has a strong willpower. A steel-like urge can melt away all kinds of difficulties and calamities like a candle of wax.

He made the wheel-chair a substitute for his now defunct legs and started practicing games and sports which can be



*The archer Murlikant Pethkar seated in a wheel-chair*

played while sitting in the wheel-chair. He would run with the wheel-chair so fast that soon he began to be considered a symbol and a model of supreme human strength and prowess. He started playing the game of disk throwing. He soon became adept at marksmanship and also of hitting the bull accurately with arrows. He also became a fairly good wrestler. He even

started playing table tennis stylishly while sitting in the wheel-chair.

But more than all these games, he enjoyed swimming the most. For pushing oneself forward in water, one has to move ones hands and legs constantly. He did have the hands but the legs, were that of the wheel-chair, which were of no use. Yet with the help of his strong arms he became an expert swimmer. He could swim both free-style and breast stroke.\* He was now a better swimmer than even his coach. Although his legs were completely dead, he moved like a fish when he swam.

In July 1969, the commonwealth games for the physically challenge were organised in which Murli participated with great enthusiasm. He won a gold medal in the swimming competition and a bronze in table-tennis. He won silver medals in many other events. He showed such prowess in these games that he was adjudged the best sportsman of the commonwealth games meet. Taking his achievements into consideration, he was promoted to the rank of a company havaldar in the army.

None of the Indian sportsmen or women could win even a single gold medal in the 1968 Mexico Olympics. An Indian had not won gold in any of the individual events in any of the Olympic meets yet. With such a background of the performance of Indian participants in Olympic games, it was indeed very creditable that an Indian participant had secured a gold in the Commonwealth Olympic games organised for the physically challenge. This credit goes to Murlikant Rajaram Pethkar of the Indian armed forces. He thus became the first Indian ever to win a gold medal in individual events in any of the commonwealth games. Can there be a more significant achievement than this in the field of sports ?

Murlikant went on amassing more and more

achievements thereafter. When a sports meet for the physically challenge was organised in Mumbai, he won prizes in hammer throw, javeline throw and shot put. He also had the distinction of standing first in all the swimming events. In all he secured eight gold medals in the entire meet and was judged the best sportsman of the meet.

In august 1972, the 21st International Sports Meet was organised in the city of Heidelberg in West Germany. Murli not only participated in it but recorded magnificent achievements, thereby enhancing the reputation of his country. Before that he had held a record for 50 metres free-style swimming with a timing of 38 seconds. He broke his own record at Heiadelberg and established a new world record of covering the distance with a timing of 3.73 seconds.

There is no disappointment or despair in the life of Murlikant Pethkar now. He does not experience any feeling of frustration or despondency. His face always glitters with happiness. It only reflects courage and confidence. He has so far secured more than 140 gold medals in national and international sports meets, the number of silver and bronze medals being countless. He has toured almost all regions of the world barring Africa, Russia and China. Although he has visited a number of countries of the world, he takes singular pride in being an Indian. A real son of the Indian soil indeed !

He is today a symbol of iron determination in all the spheres in which he participates, whether it is wrestling, table-tennis, swimming or any other event.





## The Swimmer Who Challenged Fate

---

This one is the story of a lad whose first love was swimming. Whenever and wherever he could come across a pool of water, he would immediately develop an urge to swim. He would not leave any opportunity that came his way. But he was unable to hear the sound that was made when he would slap the surface of the water, nor could he express the feeling of happiness while entering the pool. The reason: He was born deaf and dumb. To add to this, one of his eyes was partially blind while the other one was unable to see at all.

An ordinary person would feel completely frustrated and dejected in such a situation. He would lead a dependents life. But Taranath Shenoy was made of different clay. He took to studies seriously and passed the SSC examination with a first class. Two of his brothers, Sharad and Gopinath, both of whom had participated in the national level swimming competitions, would help Taranath in swimming. From 1968 onwards, Taranath also started participating in swimming competitions. He secured the first position in about 30 competitions. In 1981, he swam the Palk creek in a competition and came second in it. In the fifth All Indian Ocean Swimming Competition organised in Mumbai, he swam a distance of 35 miles and came second. In 1980, he joined the chief cashier's office of the central railway as a clerk and in March 1981, he

was adjudged the best and most efficient employee from among the physically challenge employees of the establishment.

Taranath continued to participate in swimming competitions one after the other and started winning medals and other prizes in most of them, including many ocean swimming competitions. While he was still at school, he secured first position in the National Junior Swimming Competitions held in New Delhi in 1975, emulating a similar success two years later at Tiruanantpuram. In 1976, he entered the ocean swimming competition and secured a second position in the swimming event between Chowpati and Bandra. Thereafter he swam the distance of 21 miles between Shrilanka's Talimannar and Tamil Nadu's Dhanushkodi in just 15 hours. But Taranath Shenoy had the urge to cross the English Channel. Similar is the dream of every expert swimmer in the world. However, to dream that way is one thing and to achieve it in reality is quite another. The reason is that such a venture is very expensive and therefore requires strong financial support. This includes expenses for air travel to and fro between England and India, expenditure for accommodation in England, for acclimatisation purposes, for about a month before the adventure is undertaken, expenditure for pilot boats and for other such arrangements. The other difficult thing the swimmer has to face is the severe cold in and around the English Channel. It makes even the strongest swimmers in the world tremble.

But Taranath Shenoy was determined to swim the English Channel, come what may. He wanted to enroll his name once and for all among the fastest physically challenge swimmers in the world. Taranath made the first attempt to

swim the channel in 1981 but it proved abortive and had to be abandoned in the middle as the water temperature reached 120 centigrade. Two years later he made a second attempt, successful this time, in which he took ten hours and 54 minutes to cross the distance between France and England. For this achievement, Taranath was awarded a medal.

Taranath may have failed in the first attempt but succeeded in the second one hands down. He was fortunate that the temperature of the water was 60o F and the height of the ocean waves was not more than 5-6 meters. Nor did he have to face any uncertainty of weather conditions like the unexpected tides. It was because of all these favourable conditions that his journey between Cape Greez - Nez of France and Dover of England proved safe. As his vision was very weak, he had to swim the first three early morning hours with the help of the headlights of the pilot boats. He required 66-68 'strokes' during his entire journey in the channel.

On successful completion of the venture, his brother enquired from him with the help of the sign language whether Taranath would like to cross the channel both ways in a single attempt. Taranath replied, "If ten minutes rest is allowed, I would be willing to swim back to France again." But as no arrangements were made in advance for Taranath's return journey to France, the idea had to be given up. Yet Taranath's confident reply aptly reflected his courage, grit and prowess.

In 1981, Taranath successfully swam the Palk Creek. He then crossed the English Channel and in the process set a new record of crossing the Channel in the shortest possible time by a disabled swimmer. His next target seems to be to cross the English Channel both ways in a single attempt. Taranath's sister, who is a medical practitioner, jokingly remarked, "the most significant achievement in all this would be to cross the seven seas."

To his sister's remark, Taranath merely said, "The English Channel is an English Channel, unique in every sense. Its magical spell is totally different."

Taranath also participated in the competition held in Mumbai in which one had to swim the distance between the Gateway of India and Dharamtar, both ways in a single attempt. It meant a total distance of 42 miles. On 15th March 1984, this 24 year old swimmer Taranath completed it in a time slot of 17 hours and 43 minutes. The only successful attempt to cover this distance prior to that was by the swimmer Madhusudan Thakur. But Thakur took 32 hours to complete the swim, while Taranath did it in only 17 hours and 43 minutes. This partially blind swimmer covered the distance between the Gate Way of India and Dharamtar comparatively easily and without much difficulty, but on the return swim he faced rough waters. He signaled his victory by raising his hand above the water level, but simultaneously also said in his sign language, "I was caught in the midst of tides. I had to face the breeze coming from the opposite side and that is why I was four hours late in completing the distance."

Taranath had a similar keen desire to cross the English Channel both ways. He made one attempt to fulfil his urge. But when he was just 8 miles away from his final assault, he had to abort the attempt because of rough weather and thick fog.

In 1987, Taranath recorded one more achievement to his credit. He decided to swim the 21 mile long Catalina Creek that lies between Los Angeles and the Catalina Islands on the Western seaboard of the U.S. When Taranath started his swim, the temperatures were ranging between 15 and 20 degrees Celsius. He started his swim in the early hours of the morning

with full determination to succeed and completed the distance in 10 hours and 53 minutes, thereby becoming the first ever physically disabled swimmer to cross the Catalina Creek. With this successful feat, Taranath is now acclaimed as the world's fastest and most powerful physically challenged swimmer. Well done Taranath !



The Indian Cricketer Anil Kumble of Bangalore, while accepting the Arjuna Award, said that he was honoured to receive the award along with Malathi Holla. This Malathi Holla won four gold medals in 1989 in World Masters in Denmark in shot put and discus-throw. After two years in Australian Open in Queensland she won three gold medals in shot put, javelin-throw and discus-throw. Then in 1994 she won silver medal in discus throw, in Beijing. She, then, took part in table-tennis and swimming.

Adversity does not damper her spirit. The shot put often slips from her hand and lands on her thighs, which results in blood clots. As a consequence, she has to undergo several operations, but who cares? With a smile on her face, she says: "I am happy and proud that my achievement is recognised. I have come to think that my handicap is God's gift. If I had been normal, maybe, I would never have tried the different things I did. But I would like most to be the role model not only for the handicapped but also for normal people."

Like Anil kumble, who is a role model in cricket, Malathi Holla has also become a role model for others to emulate.

## The Dauntless Nari Contractor

---

The story dates back to 17th March, 1962 when the Indian cricket team was on a tour of the West Indies. The Indians were facing some of the best cricketers representing the island of Barbados – an island, considered to be the gold mine of players.

The portents were all there. An easy batting wicket with Wasley Hall, a frightening West Indian giant with smooth bowling action, at one end. At the other end an equally frightening terror who had earned a nasty reputation for 'chucking', named Charlie Griffith. The latter was largely unknown to the Indian side. 'Big Charlie' was playing on his home ground at Bridgetown and his favourite fans were cheering every action of his.

The Indian team was plagued by many injuries. They had already lost two test matches and today they were shell-shocked.

Nari Contractor, the Indian skipper who had celebrated his 28th birthday just a few days before had decided to keep away from the Barbados match because he had played all the earlier matches. But as luck would have it, quite a few injuries on the Indian side had narrowed down his choice and he had no alternative but to play the Barbados encounter.

To be exact, the present story relates to the post-lunch play on the second day at the Kensington oval ground situated at Bridgetown. The second over was being bowled. The

'tornado' Charlie Griffith was bowling with all the strength and power at his command. He was being faced at the crease by the gentleman – cricketer and India's opening batsman and left hander, Nari Contractor. The fourth ball of the second over was delivered devastatingly, as if it was meant to end the brilliant career of the Indian skipper. The ball hit the batsman an inch above his right ear, with such a thud that the spectators could hear the sound of



*Nariman Contractor*

the thud. The batsman's temple had stopped the ball – the hit was 900 with a maximum impact. Nariman collapsed on the ground like a tall tree that had been uprooted by a cyclone. Blood started oozing from his nose and ear. Within seconds an ambulance arrived on the scene.

The Indian players continued with the match, though with a heavy heart. They were greatly concerned about the health of their captain.

The first medical bulletin that was issued on Contractor's condition said that there was nothing much to worry about. But thereafter his condition started deteriorating and the second bulletin carried a shocking statement that Contractor had suffered a hemorrhage and that his left side was showing signs of paralysis. It was feared that he might be suffering from concussion of the brain. The specialist neurosurgeon was not immediately available because he lived on another island, Trinidad. It was risky to wait till he arrived. Hence the surgeon who was immediately available on the island of Barbados started giving the patient necessary treatment and removed

much of the blood clotting on the brain by surgery. Simultaneously, an emergency call was sent to Trinidad to summon the specialist.

When the specialist arrived and examined Contractor, he found that the process of blood clotting was about to begin at another section of his brain. Hence after eight hours of surgery by the local surgeon, the patient, who was under the impact of a paralytic bout, had to undergo another operation for which blood transfusion was necessary.

Frank Warrel, the generous Captain of the West Indies team was the first to donate blood. He was followed by the Indian players Chandu Borde, P. G. ('Bapu') Nadkarni and Polly Umrigar. That night the cricket

lovers of the Barbados Island attended church for a special mass to pray for the life of Nari Contractor, the Indian skipper. Nari's left side remained paralysed for ten days and his vision was badly affected as well.

Yet Contractor's life was ultimately saved. On return to India, he had to undergo a third operation, this time at Vellore in Southern India.

A player who was saved three times from the jaws of death would normally bid goodbye to the game and retire



*Nariman Contractor*



peacefully. But Contractor was not made of that 'stuff'. He was not one to run away in sheer fear. He returned to the game and started playing for Gujarat in the Ranji Trophy encounters and started facing the bowlers with the same courage and confidence for which he was widely known. He also captained Gujarat's cricket team with great ability and competence.

In the 1968-69 cricketing season, he almost wrought miracles. He ably substituted the all-rounder Russi Surti who had left for Australia for good. More than that he brought fresh vigour to Gujarat's team, which would defeat the relatively strong teams of Saurashtra, Vadodara and Maharashtra. He remained at the crease for more than seven long hours against the strong Mumbai team and scored a solid 132 runs, thereby snatching a victory, which was almost within the reach of the Mumbai team. The match ended in a draw, although Mumbai was declared the winner on the basis of the lead they had registered against Gujarat in the first innings. The Gujarat team was only one point behind the Mumbai team, which had obtained 25 points.

Nariman Contractor, who had returned from the jaws of death, played in the Ranji Trophy encounters at home between the years 1963-64 and 1970-71. He also scored quite a few centuries during these matches. He scored 1740 runs in the eight cricketing seasons under reference. He was again being considered for the Indian team as an opener. Once I asked Nari, "What thoughts come to your mind when you face bowling after the serious mishap at Barbados?" To this his spontaneous reply was, "Nothing particular at all! Continue to play now with the same original confidence. ~~May~~ be I have now ceased to have any fear any more. Even if the ~~ball~~ is aimed at my head, it would matter very little for me. That is because a steel plate has been fixed inside the head. Hence I hit the ball the same way I used to hit it before, irrespective of the speed

with which it is hurled at me. And I shall continue to do so even in future."

Although Nariman Contractor never played a test match after that accident, his very return to the game with courage and confidence would be considered triumph of will over fate !



Philip Derbyshire was born with a rare bone disorder. As time passed, the disease worsened and he had his two feet amputated but Philip was made of sterner stuff and he continued to play, his favourite being water-skiing. He participated in a variety of sports - running, swimming, cycling and even football. Once after skiing across water with the help of an instructor, he decided to ski on his own. The kind of boy that he is, Philip received Child of Achievement Prize, a trophy and a letter of appreciation from the Queen of England and the Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

When he was told that his feet would have to be amputated, he asked his mother Carol not to be upset and not to lose heart. After the operation, he looked cheerful, though in great pain. Philip suffered from Bilateral Parazil Fibular Hemilia, which in simple language means that he has no fibula, - the narrow bone on the outer side of the lower leg- in his right leg and just three quarters of one in the other. It is a very rare condition and Philip is one of only four people in Britain that suffers from it. After the operation, he was fitted with artificial feet and which raised his height by two inches. He accepted his fate with a smiling face. He cycles and plays for his football team as a goal-keeper. He took to water skiing and joined the scouts and won an award. His mother Carol is all praise for him. She says, "He is a wonderful boy. He asks me not to feel discouraged in life and not to shed tears. Let not adversity defeat us." What a boy !

## The Palmless Wrestler

---

"Don't stand here. Just go away. Otherwise you will have a sound beating and then you will repent."

This was addressed to a lad who wanted to be a wrestler. He was by now very familiar with such threats. It had become common to him, almost an every day affair. Hence he remained standing steadfast and did not move an inch that day.

By now another stoutly built boy came forward and said something to him by way of consolation, "My dear, you are a disabled chap. What makes you so stiff and arrogant?"

The lad again remained unmoved and did not leave the place. He stood unshaken. He soon received a final warning. One fellow gave a signal to his accomplices and suddenly three to four of them pounced upon him and started beating him. Although he did not have palms, the lad also started retaliating and gave a few blows and punches to the rivals. But he was alone against so many on the other side. Finally, he had to give up.

He returned home that evening with a few bruises. His clothes were torn by his attackers. He became sullen yet his spirit remained unruffled, unscathed. He realised that a man is made strong not by anything else but by constant hard work. Ultimately it is one's efforts that bring achievements and successes in life. At that very moment he took a vow to put

maximum efforts to become a wrestler, a good gymnast, a strong person physically and mentally so that he could teach a proper lesson to those who would ever under-estimate him. Even the wrestlers would keep away from him.

He realised that to become a wrestler, one has to undergo regular physical exercises. He started doing them at home without anybody's knowledge.

His name was Padmaraj.

One day while he was training, his brother-in-law spotted him and got angry. The brother-in-law asked Padmaraj to go to a gymnasium instead, where adequate facilities were available to become a wrestler. One could not become a wrestler practising at home according to his brother-in-law.

Padmaraj expressed his inability to go to a gymnasium because his father was strongly against it. Once his father had said that since Padmaraj did not have palms, he would not be able to become a wrestler and that he should give up the whole idea. His father in the heat of his anger had also said that those who take to physical exercises gradually become mentally and intellectually weak and they finally turn dullards. And if this really happened to Padmaraj as it surely would, he would not be able to do anything to earn his livelihood, said his father.

Hearing all this from Padmaraj, his brother-in-law had a hearty laugh. Nevertheless, he said to Padmaraj that all that his father had said was not really true and nothing of the kind had happened to him although he (the brother-in-law) too undertook physical exercises every day as a matter of routine. He also asked Padmaraj not to be afraid of his father and that he would persuade his father-in-law to change his mind. He then asked Padmaraj to accompany him to the gymnasium every day if he really wanted to be a wrestler.

With what his brother-in-law had told him, Padmaraj

was greatly relieved of his worries. But soon tragedy struck. He lost his mother, and that came as a great shock to him. He would spend most of his time crying and remembering his mother. To give him relief from the mental agony he was experiencing, his brother-in-law one day took him to the gymnasium. After that it became a routine for Padmaraj to visit the gymnasium. Gradually he started learning various kinds of techniques in the art of wrestling.

In wrestling, palms play a vital role. If one were to wrestle with the opponent, one has to do it with the help of ones palms. If one has to hold the opponent tightfisted, that too requires use of the palms. But Padmaraj was born without palms.

Other wrestlers started cutting jokes at Padmaraj in view of the physical deficiency he suffered from. They would derisively ask each other if ever they had come across a wrestler who had no palms. They would then say to Padmaraj that all his efforts would go in vain.

Padmaraj started ignoring such remarks although those were directed against him intentionally. He kept on learning various tricks to trap the opponent. If the opponent was using his palms against Padmaraj, the later would use his wrists. His wrists were so strong that once the opponent was caught between them, it would be difficult for him to get free from the clutches of Padmaraj. Padmaraj would spend long hours in the gymnasium and gradually mastered the art of wrestling.

Padmaraj participated in wrestling competitions organised at the district level and won first prize. Once a wrestling competition was organised in the Kanyakubja College where he was a student. But no one had the guts to compete with him with the result that he was declared winner unopposed.

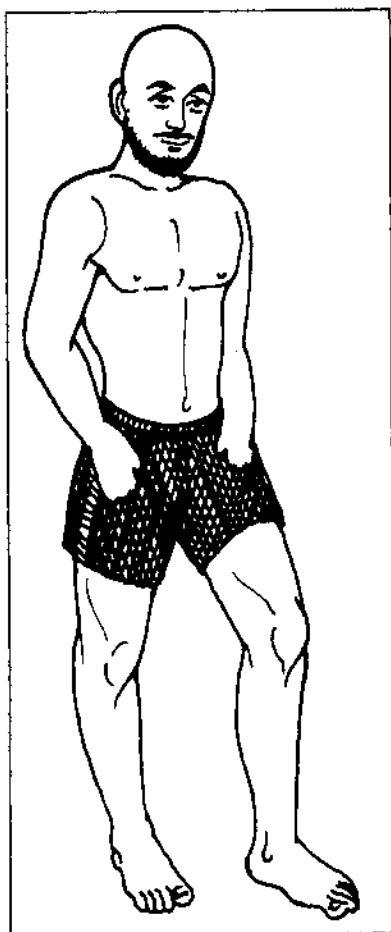
The state of Uttar Pradesh in India is known for its wrestling prowess. It has produced very great wrestlers. Padmaraj took part in the annual state level wrestling competitions organised in the year 1966 and won second position.

Such was the magic of Padmaraj, the wrestler without palms.

Padmaraj was born on 2nd October 1942 at Kanpur. When his mother saw the newly born child without palms, she was greatly shocked. His father Shyamdas Arora was at a loss to understand how the child would grow and lead a normal independent and self-reliant life.

When Padmaraj was nine-year old, he would see children of his age playing merrily and would wonder if he too would be able to indulge in such merry-making. He would often feel dejected, realising that he may have to lead a dependent life because of the disability he was suffering from at birth.

It was in this depressing situation that his brother-in-law came to his rescue and introduced him to a gymnasium for undergoing training in wrestling and where he soon



*Padmaraj going to gymnasium*

developed expertise in martial art. Due to this his confidence was enhanced with the result that he started playing foot-ball too, and would take any position except that of a goal-keeper.

He achieved very many great things in life by sheer determination and hard work. If he was good at sports, he was good at studies too. He obtained a B.Com. degree in 1964. It was at this time that he became a champion wrestler at Lucknow University and also became a captain of the University wrestling team. He also joined as a clerk in the NCC office at Lucknow. He not only learnt how to write without the use of a palm but his handwriting was beautiful and ornamental.

By this time, he got a better job in the civil supplies department of Punjab with a posting at Chandigadh where he rose to the position of senior auditor.

Once while he was crossing the bridge on the river Gomti at Lucknow, he saw an eight year old girl drowning. All those who were witnessing the incident were only shouting for help from others, but none had the courage to jump into the river to save the girl. It was Padmaraj who showed valour, jumped into the river and finally saved the girl. He then took the girl to her home in an auto-rickshaw where the father of the girl literally prostrated before Padmaraj and profusely thanked him for saving his daughter from drowning.

Thus Padmaraj could successfully surpass the physical deficiency that he had from the time of his birth. He could do so by dint of sheer determination and willpower.

He also learnt how to ride a motorbike and could easily ride it even in very busy thoroughfares of the city. Thousands would watch him with amazement. To top it all, he also learned how to fire a pistol and a revolver.

Generally speaking, it is found that a man born with a handicap like that of Padmaraj would reconcile himself to a



*Padmaraj with his wife*

life of dependency. But Padmaraj was of a rare breed that proved what a person can achieve, given the right dose of courage, confidence and determination.



The Ranji Trophy cricket player from Bihar Anjan Bhattacharya was given the Arjun Award in 1975. When the Hon'ble President of India handed over the award to Anjan at a special ceremony at the Rastrapati Bhavan, the recipient merely smiled on receiving it from the President. The reason was that Anjan has been a dumb and deaf person. He has been playing in the Ranji Trophy matches since 1970 as a medium pace bowler. His best performance was 7 wickets for 10 runs.



## The Polio-stricken Swimmer

---

What kind of feelings one harbour when at the end of a long and arduous journey one achieves one's dream or when one's longstanding ambition is fulfilled? When at the end of hard work, exertion and struggle lasting for many years one achieves victory in the Olympic games and when at that moment of time the feelings, suppressed for a long time, burst into a torrent crossing all limits of human endurance? It often leads to the rolling down of tears from ones eyes ofcourse tears of happiness and not those of sorrow. It has been experienced that such people weep profusely, hiding their faces in their palms.

In the Melbourne Olympic games held in 1956, the women's 100 metres aquatic butterfly race was in progress. Every participant was supposed to cover a distance of 109 yards and 1 foot at the fastest possible speed to win the race. It was the first time in the history of the Olympic games that such a race was introduced in the women's category. The race was dominated by the American athletes from the beginning, so much so that all three medals of the race were won by the U.S. participants. Shelley Man got the gold, Nancy Ram obtained the silver and Mary Seers won the bronze. Shelley had set a new record and when she stood on the victory stand to receive the honours, she burst into wild tears.

The spectators in the stands naturally thought that her tears were those of happiness for winning the gold, but in

reality her happiness was combined with a feeling of deep anguish at that moment of time. At this hour of glory she could not forget the sad memories of her childhood. The same Shelley who could not move even a muscle in her childhood, had today become the world champion in the butterfly aquatic race and had won a gold medal.

When Shelley was just five years of age, she was afflicted with the dreaded disease, polio. The attack was so severe that it had crippled her completely. She could hardly move her limbs. To resurrect her muscles, the doctors thought that swimming was indispensable for her. When she raised her hand for the first time above the water level in a swimming pool, her happiness was endless. The experience of doing that on her own was both happy and shocking. It became a routine matter for her to practice it every day. Thereafter she started making great progress. Initially she crossed a distance of 10 meters in the pool, then she started swimming across the width of the pool, then the whole length of the pool and finally she started increasing the distance to be covered daily. Due to all this, there was new life in the otherwise dead muscles in Shelley's body and a day came when she became America's greatest female swimmer. She established eight new records in aquatic competitions in the United States. Thereafter she set a new Olympic record in 100 meters butterfly race with a timing of 1 minute and 11 seconds. When she was standing on the victory stand to receive the Olympic gold, she was wondering if the happiness she was filled with today, was equivalent to the happiness she had felt on the day she had raised her hand above the water level in the pool when she was just five years old ! Incredible achievement indeed !



## Strong Mind, Unflinching Spirit

---

The year was 1969 and the day was a most auspicious one, the day that instills the New Year with fresh hopes, new aspirations and renewed commitments. There is merrymaking and revelry everywhere. On this day people meet each other to express their good wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year. Sweets are distributed, crackers burst, lamps lit and there is illumination everywhere.

But the New Year of Vikram Samvat 2026 proved to be a black day for the residents of the city of Ahmedabad. Communal riots broke out on a large scale. Animosity suddenly broke out between two religious communities, shattering their age-old amicable relationship. Rumours lighted the fire of hatred more rapidly. Man hated man as never before and humanity was given a general go-by. Those who had lit the fire of hatred among the religious groups were deriving maximum benefits from this carnage. Anti-social elements had a field day. They were killing innocent people, including women and children, in broad daylight. Houses and shops were set on fire, property worth millions of rupees was destroyed, and corpses lay shattered on the streets, making it a virtual feast for vultures. All this in the name of God and religion !

On one evening during the days of the carnage described above, a twelve year old lad Chandu, had just stepped out of

his home. He was searching for his brother to call him for dinner. No sooner did he set his foot outside his house and then there was a loud explosion - so loud that the buildings in the area shook, windowpanes were broken to pieces and lights in the entire locality went out, spreading darkness all around. Panic spread like wild fire. People quickly took shelter in their homes and bolted their houses from inside. After some time, electric power was



*Wounded body, indomitable will*

restored and people came out on the streets to find out what had happened. What some saw on the road near their homes was a shocking spectacle for them. The lad who a few minutes before had come out of his home to call his brother for the evening meal, was lying on the road in a pool of blood in an unconscious condition. One of his palms lay beside him, separated from the hand while the fingers of the other lay shattered at a distance from the site. His entire face had received severe burns. Seeing her dear son laying in such a condition on the road, his mother screamed with agony.

"Dear Chandu ! What has happened to you ?" she screamed.

People gathered at the place with fear in their minds. Everyone felt insecure. However, the mother of the boy took him to the hospital for immediate treatment. When Chandu regained consciousness he found that both of his palms were completely smashed and that both hands had been cut at the wrist as a result of the bomb explosion. Relatives and friends visited the hospital to inquire about Chandu's condition. Some of them were not shy to make odd remarks for the future of the boy.

"Oh, poor Chandu ! His condition now is so bad that he will not be able to do anything in his life. He will be fully dependent on others for everything."

Some other would say, "Instead of leading a dependents life, is it not better to die ?"

The third who happened to be his friend remarked, "Poor Chandu has lost both of his palms. He is very fond of cricket. He will not be able to play the game anymore as a member of the 'Vijay Cricket Team', which he himself had established. Without hands, how can he hold the bat ?"

Some other said, "Life without hands is no life. It would lead to dependence on others for the whole of one's life. Oh, poor Chandu !"

Chandu would listen to such remarks, but that would not depress him. He would not take pity on himself, nor would he shed any tears. He was not afraid of the difficulties he may have to face for the rest of his life. He had enough courage to face the future, whatever it may be. He did not want to be defeated. He was endowed with strong willpower.

Chandu had once read the story of a boy who had lost both of his hands in an accident, and still he had continued his studies. He had the urge to become an engineer.

Thinking all the while about that boy, Chandu would say to himself that if that boy could think of becoming an engineer, why could he not think along similar lines? What does it matter if he has no hands ? He had a strong mind and an equally strong heart.

He would go on repeating this thing again and again. He was determined to study further and never to get dejected.

Initially he faced many difficulties. With no hands, how

would he eat? How would he hold the glass of water? None of this depressed him. Whenever he faced any difficulty, he would find out a way to tackle it. On the contrary, he would feel happy to meet the challenges that came his way every moment and everywhere. He trained his hands in such a manner that he would not feel the absence of the hands or fingers at all. Gradually he learnt to do many things that are a part of the routine day-to-day human activities.

He discovered a unique method of writing by holding the pen between the two hands. He would hold the paper tightly

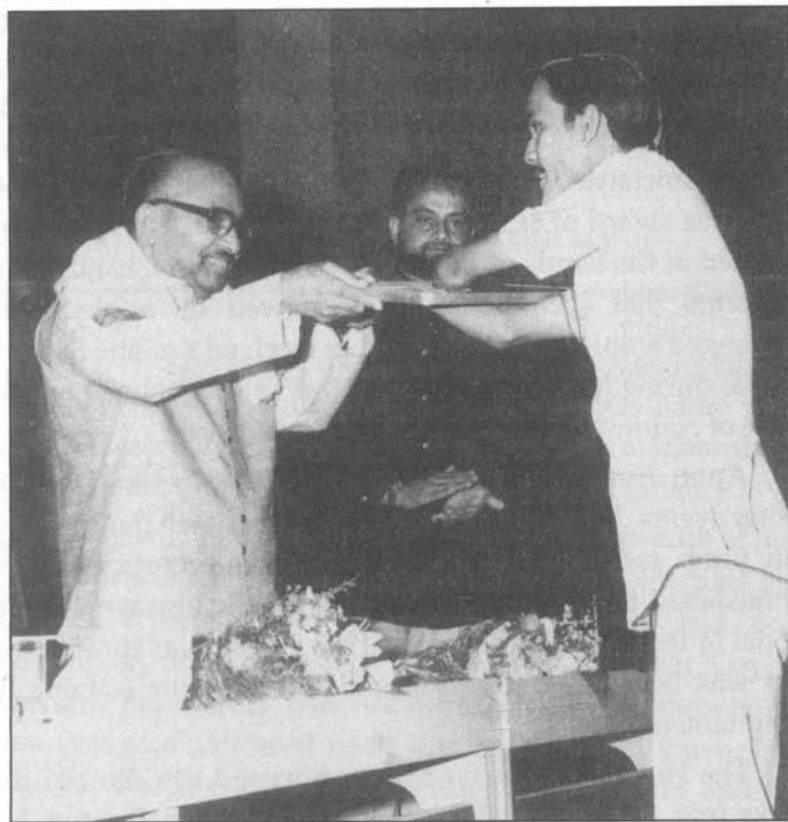


*Runner Chandu*

with the help of his leg and then start writing on it. In the course of time, Chandu started writing with speed. The onlookers would be amazed to see him write like this and that too with speed.

After two years, he joined a school. He had resolved to study and educate himself. He enrolled himself in standard VII. He may not have had hands, but he had strong will and a strong craving. He may not have had fingers, but his enthusiasm was enormous and matchless. In the course of time, he started taking part in extra-curricular activities of the school and was elected the leader of the Student's Representative Council. He also started playing a few games and would participate in sports competitions. Initially he could not participate in sprint events because an absence of hands would obstruct his efforts to build up speed. To overcome this difficulty, Chandu started practicing more and more. He trained himself in the art of running and gradually started picking up speed. In this too, his willpower and determination came to his rescue.

On 9th March 1973, a sports meet, especially for the physically challenge from Maharashtra and Gujarat, was organised at the Brabourne Stadium, Mumbai. It included a 100 meters sprint event also. Chandu was one of the competitors. In the initial race three runners established a lead over others, one from Maharashtra aged 25, another also from the same state but aged 18 and the third was Chandulal Tarachand Bhati from Gujarat aged 15, in that order. In the final few meters, Chandu overpowered the others and won the first position and the gold medal. In the long jump event Chandu secured a bronze medal. Thus in the very first inter-state meet in which Chandu had participated, he brought glory to Gujarat by winning one gold and one bronze medal.



*Chandulal Bhati*

He was awarded the medals at the hands of no less a person than the great Indian cricketer Sunil Gavaskar.

Even in studies, he remained at the forefront. He would write his own answer-books. He secured 65% marks in the final examination held at the Apang Manav Mandal for Standard VII and secured first position.

Gradually, Chandu started spinning a Charkha. In this also he faced some initial difficulties, which he overcame in course of time. He also learnt how to light a stove, stitch clothes and draw pictures.



### *The Brave Hearts*

After passing Standard XII examination, he wanted to join a college for higher studies. But the financial condition of the family did not allow him to do so. He then decided to obtain a job. He finally got into the office of the Ahmedabad District Panchayat. His sincerity and honesty won him the best employee award of Government of Gujarat in 1981, which he received at the hands of the then Governor Shri Chandy. It is not often that such honour is bestowed on a physically challenged employee. He has neither received a memo nor any rebuke during his long tenure and this speaks<sup>\*</sup> volume for the sense of commitment of this government servant.

Apart from sprint events, he also won prizes in other sports events. In 1981, he won the silver medal in the hop stop and jump race in the All India sports meet organised in Ahmedabad for the physically challenge. He also won a gold medal in the long jump event in 1987 in a similar sports meet that was held in Delhi. He has also undergone training in mountaineering.

The Himalayas always beacon him and has climbed the peaks four times. His wife is also physically challenged. He has a son Maulik and a daughter Maitri, both students. Chandubhai lends his services to the Society for the physically handicapped, Manav Seva Mandal, Apang Ekta Samiti and Apang Credit Society. He is the secretary of the Gujarat Branch of International Disability Helpline. The helpline provides guidance to the physically challenged. He also runs a centre for AIDS control in Nava Vadaj and has been contemplating a scheme to help the handicapped in villages of Gujarat. Chandulal Bhati has now become a role model for others.



## A Marksman Extraordinary

---

In the Hungarian capital of Budapest, there lived a young man who was very fond of marksmanship. His name was Karoly Takacs. He had defeated some of the best marksmen of his country in various shooting competitions in Hungary.

He received praise through the length and breadth of the country for the accuracy with which he used to fire and hit targets. Everyone would say that the country had not produced any other marksman with the expertise that Karoly possessed. But Karoly was not content with the shower of praise that was bestowed upon him by his countrymen. He wanted to become the best marksman of the world and to achieve that unique status, he thought, and rightly so, that it was relatively easy to be the best in the country, but not so when you face superior marksmen from all over the world. Karoly Takacs had acquired an expertise in rapid fire pistol shooting more than in any other types. Taking the world as a whole, countries like Argentina, Switzerland and Rumania did have a large number of experts who could match the expertise of Karoly in rapid fire shooting and might even be superior to him.

Karoly was bestowed with enthusiasm, tenacity and resoluteness. He started undergoing hard training with a view to achieving his ambition. He would practice continuously for long hours. He would not spare any efforts to achieve

accuracy. Taking all this into consideration, his countrymen thought that one day he would certainly prove himself to be the best in the world.

Japan was to host the 1940 Olympics for which Karoly had put in a lot of efforts. But then came the Second World War and he was conscripted into the army, which he willingly joined in defence of his country. As a soldier, he started giving training in marksmanship to other recruits. As a trainer he achieved good reputation and fame. He was also promoted to superior ranks in the army.

On one side he would show his prowess on the battlefield and on the other he kept on practicing in marksmanship as well.

After the war ended in 1945, fresh preparations were started to hold the Olympics once again. Karoly's ambition to become the world-best marksman got a fresh impetus and he started practising for it with greater and greater enthusiasm. The first Olympic Games after the war were to be held in London from 29th July 1948. As the 1940 and 1944 Olympic meets had to be cancelled because of the intervention of the Second World War, like other sportsmen, Karoly also had to wait long years to fulfil his ambition to obtain a gold medal in marksmanship. As the days of the Olympic Games approached, his enthusiasm too was multiplying.

When one feels that the fulfillment of the ambition is just about to be a reality, one has often to face some critical tests, which takes the reality away from us. The obstacles that come in the way at that time can shatter our dreams to pieces.

One evening, during late hours, when Karoly was returning home in his car and when there was darkness all around, another car appeared from nowhere and crashed against his car at a sharp turn. By the time the other car had

collided with his car, Karoly had already stopped his own and yet the impact of the collision was so great that it reduced both cars to rubble. Karoly was seriously injured in the accident.

The news of the accident spread in his country like wild fire and it created a tremendous commotion everywhere. Karoly was hospitalised and his right hand, which was seriously injured, had to be amputated.

What a tragedy ! The hand that would have brought a gold medal to Karoly and glory to Hungary had to be amputated by the doctors. The entire country was drowned in grief. A single accident had shattered not only the ambition of one man, but also the dream of Hungarians as a whole. It was natural that the members of his family, relatives, friends and well wishers, all, were deeply grieved and all of them almost gave up the hopes they had nursed for years. The only person who had not suffered a stroke of depression, the one who did not despair and the one who had not given up hopes despite the tragic accident was none other than Karoly Takacs himself. His inner mind was constantly telling him that life does not make or mar the victor; it is the other way round, that it is the victor who makes or mars the life. A spirited player never surrenders to circumstances. Karoly was absolutely certain that circumstances do not mould and make the player; it is the player who moulds and makes circumstances.

After months of treatment, Karoly was discharged from hospital. On return home, he started spending his time alone, in isolation from others. He would not go out. He would not meet anyone.

Most people thought that Karoly could not reconcile himself to the situation, and that he could not get over the impact of the tragic incident.

His friends started wondering as to what Karoly must be doing all alone all the time. But people got the answer after two years when the Olympics were to be held in London. He gave a great surprise to everyone by taking part in the Olympic shooting competition. More than that he secured the first position in the event by defeating competitors hailing from various countries. Everyone was flabbergasted at his strong determination and unflinching willpower.

Karoly who had lost his right hand in the accident, achieved success with the help of his left hand. It was a success achieved by a person who had only one hand against those whose both hands were intact.

Really speaking Karoly's success came much before he secured a gold medal in the Olympics. After losing the right hand forever, Karoly did not allow himself to be drawn into the vortex of despair and frustration, although there was pessimism everywhere else. He said to himself that it did not matter that the right hand was not there. He would attain his ambition by using his left hand. He then started practising with the help of his left hand during the long days of his isolation. During this process, he faced many difficulties, and fought many problems. At times he suffered failure also. But at the end of all these trials and tribulations he finally achieved success.

Karoly had secured 580 marks out of 600 in the rapid fire shooting competition. Carols E. Diaz Saenz Valiente had secured second position with 571 marks while Sven Lundavist stood third securing 569 marks.

When Karoly climbed the victory stands, he was greeted by wild applause from the spectators. He held the gold medal in his left hand.

## *A Marksman Extraordinary*



*Karoly Takacs*

Karoly repeated his performance four years later in 1952 at the next Olympics held in Helsinki, securing the gold once again.

When someone asked him what was the secret of his achievement in winning two gold medals in succession in the Olympic Games, his reply was : "With hard work and constant practise, even the impossible becomes possible. After discharge from the hospital, I started practising with the left hand. In the beginning I faced many difficulties. But I had resolved that I would achieve the success by mastering marksmanship with only one hand. I continued working hard without interruption, without a break. The victory I have achieved today is the result of that." And what a victory !



## A Runner Who Knew No Hurdles

---

At the age of seventeen, Murray Halberg had to be taught afresh how to eat and drink how to wear clothes and how to do such other daily chores that are common in the life of human beings. The reason was that Murray had lost one of his hands while playing Rugby. In fact he was so seriously injured that he was not even expected to live. Rugby is a game akin to football, though in the former one every player tries to snatch the ball from other players. One day in the year 1950, while playing the game, he was seriously injured resulting in blood clotting in his left shoulder. The doctors could save Murray from the jaws of death, but they could not save his left hand, which became absolutely lifeless. After this sad event, he had to retire from the game. As his left hand became useless, he had to do all activities with the help of his right hand and that is why he had to learn afresh how to do things with the help of one hand only. Not only did he learn quickly, but also, with typical courage and confidence, he fought his way back to full racing fitness, which not even a defective arm could hinder.

Halberg could do this because he had a deep rooted desire to return to the game's arena. He knew that he would not be able to play any game that requires the use of both the hands. Suddenly he thought of turning to running or racing events and to try to acquire expertise in them. For him playing was more important than the type of game he played. He knew that in that respect his choice was very limited. There

was no time to keep thinking. When he thought of sprint events, he immediately went to Arthuer Lydiard, a well-known coach. At the time Murray met him, Lydiard was coaching a number of young men for long distance and medium distance running.



*Murray Halberg*

Without going into the details of Halberg's choice or ability, the coach asked Murray to join him in cross-country run which was a difficult test for a beginner. During that cross-country run, Lydiard was keeping a constant watch on Murray to find out whether running cross-country made any difference in Murray's physiognomy and whether he felt any fatigue in between the run. But what Lydiard marked was that while the race was in progress, Murray Halberg's determination to complete the race was growing. Nevertheless, as soon as the race was over, Murray threw himself into the lap of the mother earth. Notwithstanding that, Murray had passed the test taken by the coach Arther Lydiard.

It is true that his right hand being very weak and almost lifeless (wasn't it the left hand that was injured?), Murray did feel some difficulty during the course of the cross country race, but that did not make him despair. Lydiard's way of testing his tenacity was a tough one. He used to train the learners to run 100 miles per week. Murray Halberg was not one who would think of dropping out just because of the toughness of the training.

In 1956 Murray Halberg represented New Zealand in the Melbourne Olympics as a long distance runner. The readers



may recall that the same Murray was asked to retire from the Rugby team just six years back. He took part in the 1500 metres race in the Olympics at Melbourne and ranked eleventh. He was not disappointed by his performance. That is because his coach Lydiard used to say that Murray was being trained for the 1960 Olympic Games which required training for a long time and only then could one have any faith in their capacity to win.

In 1958, Murray Halberg participated in the 5000 metre race and secured a gold medal in it. Before that he had already won the Auckland (N.Z.) Junior 380 yards title way back in 1950. But neither the Auckland race nor the commonwealth games can be compared with those of the world Olympic class. For that very rigorous training and equipment were required. Murray and Lydiard both started devoting themselves to the Olympics. Their strategy was that when only the last lap remained, the runner should suddenly start running as fast as possible, using one's reserve capacity to the full. They knew that the other runners used their reserve capacity only at that time.

During the 5000 metre race, Murray was the last runner at the end of 1000 metres, he was fifth at the end of 2000 metres and when the last three laps remained, he started running very fast, as if the 'finishing line' was very close. Seeing Murray run so fast, other competitors was greatly perplexed. He completed that lap in 61.1 seconds. Murray was twenty metres ahead of the others who were following him. Godotzki of East Germany and Kazimierz Zimny of Poland, both increased their pace but could not overtake Murray. When the last lap was still to be covered, Murray Halberg felt very tired. His head started rolling and every new step was increasing his fatigue. Yet, to keep his rivals behind, Murray made the last

effort. His rivals too were making last ditch effort to overcome him. At one time, Murray was 20 metres ahead of others, but his advantage was getting reduced bit by bit. It was 15 metres, then 10 metres and then even less than ten metres. Ultimately in the final stage Murray remained ahead of Godatzki just by 8 metres and won the race. The plan through which he was trained, the strategy that was charted out for him finally succeeded. He not only won the gold but also set a new world record in the 5000 metre race. His victory was acclaimed by all as being one that was achieved in the most adverse circumstances. The full impact of his tenacity, determination, strength and speed along with the training that was given to him by Lydiard was all aptly reflected in Murray Halberg's stupendous victory at Melbourne. Hurdles or no hurdles, Murray would win !



Ron Tomlinson, the blind English Golfer, was hit in the head by a cricket ball at the age of thirty-six and he lost his vision. He was very fond of golf but he thought he would never be able to play the game after the loss of vision and he discarded his golf set.

One day a friend of his asked Ron : "What is it that you miss the most in life ?"

Rone replied : "Golf."

The friend told him that there were blind golfers in the south of England and Ron went there to play golf. This new-found interest filled the vacuum that he had felt after the accident which had caused him his blindness.

## The Incredible Hammer-Thrower

---

This is the story of a history teacher who himself made history in the arena of Olympic sports. His name : Harold Vincent Connolly, a resident of Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A.

To narrate his story in full, I will have to take you to Melbourne, Australia where the 1956 Olympic meet was held. Among other events, the hammer-throw contest in the games turned out to be the most exciting one in the history of the Olympic Games. Connolly's closest contestants were the two Russians, Mikhail Krivonosov, the former world record holder, and Anatoly Samotsvetov, almost an equally strong contender for the Olympic title that year. Harold Connolly too had set a new world record just a year before (1955). These three were to provide the most tense and exciting competition in the hammer-throw event. Hence all eyes were set on that contest.

Anatolly Samotsvetov exhibited an excellent show in the very first round by throwing the hammer at a distance of 203 ft. 9 in, nearly six feet more than the then Olympic record. Then came the European Champion Mikhail Krivonosov whose throw covered a distance of 206 ft. 9.5 in., taking the lead in the third round.

Next to follow and try his luck was the American history teacher Connolly who hurled the iron ball from a seven-foot circle to fall short by 15 inches. Finally he entered the circle for

### *The Incredible Hammer-Thrower*

his fifth throw. It was a critical moment for him. Only two more attempts were left for him then, and he knew that he could not afford to fail again. The two Russians who were his close competitors had already created Olympic records. Watched by almost a hundred thousand spectators, Connolly braced himself for the greatest effort of his career. The man from Boston began winding himself up, leaned backwards, then made a loud guttural sound to send the 16 - pound iron ball with a 4 ft. long chain flying through the skies. Before that he had said his prayers to the Almighty to seek His blessings. All eyes followed the hammer's flight in the air and when the ball finally touched the ground with a thud, the entire stadium exploded into a mighty roar and gave a tremendous applause to Connolly whose throw measured 207 ft. 3.75 inches. Connolly gave a broad smile at his success. He raised his hand towards the crowd in acknowledgement of their cheers. Never had a performance mattered to him more than on that day.

Connolly was followed by Krivonosov who too strained himself for a supreme effort. Spinning with great ferocity, he unfortunately overstepped the 7 feet circle and was disqualified by the referees. Connolly had won.

The award ceremony was held in the presence of a large crowd. The gold medal was moving like a pendulum in Connolly's right hand. To his left and right were the Russians who had bagged the second and the third positions in the contest.

The appearance of Harold Connolly in the greatest sports show on earth, namely the Olympics, was sensational enough in another context. For, there had never been such an improbable hammer-thrower as this handsome 6 ft. tall, broad shouldered and muscular 224 pound participant from Boston.

His arm from shoulder to elbow measured 18 in. His right hand was very strong. Even a simple handshake, if anyone dared to have it, would throw the other man out of gear. But in his blue American uniform, no one could see his suspended left arm which was about two-thirds the size of his right arm.



*Harold Connolly preparing for the hammer throw*

His left arm had received fractures thirteen times in his childhood. It was never normal, as if it had suffered a paralytic bout. An ordinary person would become nervous and would lose confidence permanently there after. He could not use the hand for anything, much less for lifting a weight. But Harold Connolly would do just the opposite. He started undergoing various kinds of exercises with his left hand, including lifting weights. He worked hard to make the hand strong. Many times he would suffer fractures for instance, once when he tried to lift 125 Lb. of weight, his hand gave way like a match stick. But as soon as it became normal, Connolly started the exercises afresh. Thus this man of guts created unimaginable strength from his left hand. He set world records three times in the hammer-throw. He also won a gold medal in that event in the 1956 Olympic meet.

Connolly was operated upon for hernia and as soon as he was discharged from the hospital, he started practising again. At that time his left shoulder was under severe pain. Every time he would throw the hammer, the bone of his shoulder

## *The Incredible Hammer-Thrower*



*Harold Connolly*

would get dislocated. In spite of all this, the thirty year old sports wizard set a new world record in 1962 by a throw measuring 231 ft., 10 in. He followed it up again and set a new world record in 1965.

The hammer made of steel and weighing 16 lbs. is difficult to lift even with two hands, and yet the success that Connolly achieved in his career was the result of only one hand. This history teacher from Boston, U. S. has created new history in the world of sports by overcoming his physical disability. Is it not history !



Hitesh Dolwani of Hyderabad was born without the left hand. When he joined the summer coaching camp of YMCA, he became the butt of ridicule by his playmates. How can a player with one hand play table-tennis ? The boy with steely determination has proved the sceptics wrong and has been winning accolades for his game playing for Andhra Pradesh.

## The Legless Wonder

---

This one is the story of Charles Zimi of the United States. He developed a craze for swimming in his childhood. He was prepared to do anything for it.

But no one was prepared to train him. He was sent back by everyone whom he had approached. Everyone advised him to give up the idea of learning to swim.

But Charles did not get disappointed when he was told that he would never be able to learn to swim in his lifetime. He continued to approach people to coach him. Finally, he was admitted to a swimming pool as a learner. He entered the pool with full determination and resolves to learn somehow.

Gradually Zimi started swimming and subsequently he obtained the reputation as an expert in long-distance swimming. He set a world record by swimming continuously for 81 hours but he did not stop at that. After a few days, he set another world record by swimming at a stretch for 100 hours.

One day Zimi announced that he would swim against the current in the Hudson River. This river was known for its strong currents. It was also full of small waterfalls. Besides, it was flooded whenever the snow melted. The waves would rise so high that small boats had no chance of survival. The river was more like a sea. Zimi decided that despite this, he would start his swim from Albany and would reach New York.

Those who came to know about his plan laughed if off.

### *The Legless Wonder*

But Zimi one day put his plan into actual practice. He succeeded in covering the distance of 147 miles between Albany and New York, unmindful of hunger, fatigue and the strong current coming from the opposite direction.

Zimi's achievement was unique because he had no legs. Both of his legs had been amputated in his childhood. He earned the reputation of being a long-distance swimmer on the strength of his two wrists. What an effort !



Swimmer Trischa Zorn holds ten world records which she sets in Sweden. She took part in eight individual events and two relay sports during the world championships for the Disabled and she established new records. When competing in these events, Zorn is classified in the B-2 category for those with 20/800 vision. Zorn has aniridia blindness, which means she is without irises, the portions of the eyes that regulate the amount of light absorbed. Though she can see the rough outlines of an object up to 20 feet away, she cannot see its features.

Blind since birth, Zorn bumped against the wall quite often while swimming but that did not matter. She now participates in half-marathons and ten-kilometre running. She loves horse riding and water skiing. Challenges beacon her and she loves to accept them. She says, ".... as an athlete, I think I can do what everyone else can do because I want to do it... or do it better. Some people are so amazed that I can swim and win, but just because you're handicapped doesn't mean you can't compete or do what the able-bodied can do."



## An Incurable Optimist

---

South Africa has produced great cricketers in its cricketing history. One of them who can be specially ranked among them was a batsman named Allen Melville. He would never despair in any situation, howsoever critical it may have been. He would face any bowler with courage and without faltering. He belonged to the state of Natal in South Africa.

He joined the Oxford University in England for further studies. He had never played on a turf wicket in his country. But Oxford had only turf wickets and yet Allen never felt nervous or uneasy while playing there.

In the very first match that he played in England, he scored an unbeaten 132 runs. Everyone was amazed by his solid performance. Then he played a match against the Kent County as a member of the Oxford team and scored a gritty 78. Unfortunately he was run out in that match. Next was an encounter with the Yorkshire County in which he scored 118 runs. His style of batting was very attractive and his running between the wickets was unique. Under his captaincy, the Oxford team defeated the Cambridge University team in the year 1931. It was a glorious victory for Oxford.

Thereafter he faced a series of difficulties and problems. First, he met with a car accident in which the vertebra of his



*Powerful Batsman Allen Melville*

backbone was damaged at three places. That created many unforeseen problems for him in playing cricket. Thereafter his collarbone was broken. Then he was also operated upon for appendicitis.

In 1933 he played a match against Sussex County. He scored 114 runs in this match in just two and half hours. He hit the Sussex

bowlers all around the ground. His 'hook' and 'drive' were a treat to watch. He had adopted a beautiful style to play with a straight bat. In 1934, he became the skipper of the Sussex County team.

In 1935, he played for Sussex. In those days the pair of fast bowlers, namely, Larwood and William Voce, were creating a havoc in the world of cricket. Most leading batsmen used to shiver at their bowling. But Allen Melville really enjoyed batting against fast bowlers. He used to slash them without fear. In a match that he was playing against this pair of fast bowlers, he scored a century just in ninety minutes, although he had a fracture on his thumb. In the cricketing season of 1938-39, as a captain of the South Africa team he played against England in a Test match series. At that time also, he had injuries on his leg and thigh. In one of the Test matches, which subsequently became well known as a 'time-less test

match',\* he scored a century despite the injuries he was suffering.

During the Second World War, he faced yet another difficulty. Because of an accidental fall, his back pain recurred. This time the pain was severe. He had to wear a steel jacket continuously for eleven months. Seeing him in such a critical condition, everyone thought that Allen would never be able to play cricket again. But



*Allen Melville*

not only did he return to the game of cricket but toured England as the captain of the South African team. Allen, as if, he had a 'date' with difficulties, fractured his finger. Secondly, because of a sprain in the thigh, Melville felt acute pain. Yet he played cricket with pleasure and joy. He scored 189 and 104 (not out) in the Tent bridge Test Match. He again scored a century (117) in the Test played at Lords. Thus he scored three consecutive Test centuries, first in the 'time-less Test', then two

---

\* In the cricketing season of 1938-39, the last Test match played in South Africa between England and South Africa lasted full ten days, barring of course the interval for rest. This match was started on 3rd March 1939 and was declared 'drawn' on 14th March 1939. The match was declared over because the English team had to board a ship to return home.

In the entire history of the game of cricket, this 'time-less test match' was the longest ever played.

in the Tent bridge Test and one at Lords, thereby providing ample evidence of his batting prowess, and that too with injuries suffered one after the other. During his cricketing career, Allen Melville scored a total of 10,598 runs with 25 centuries in first class matches. One who does not despair in difficulties is the real hero. Is it not ?

Allen passed away in 1983 in South Africa at the age of Seventy two. A cricketing wonder !



Bethany Hemilton wanted to be a professional surfer when she was hardly thirteen. She participated in surfing competitions, while in school. Her father was a waiter and mother a cleaner. They both encouraged the daughter to indulge her hobby. On 31st October, 2003, at 6-40 in the morning, she plunged into the sea with friends for surfing. Minutes later, the water turned red. A shark had attacked her and she lost her one hand. Her friends brought her to the shore and were shocked to see her plight.

'Her days of surfing are over,' they said. Bethany responded with a defiant 'no'. She began surfing after sometime. In 2004, she wrote her autobiography 'Soul Surfer' and began writing novels and stories for children. She still participates in surfing competitions for about four weeks. She has surfed on the seas in Brazil, Indonesia and Australia, but she prefers the seashore of Hawaii. In 2004, she received Best Come-Back athlete award and even today, she has a pride to place in National surfing championship.

## The Sightless Wrestler

---

This is the story of a twelve year old lad who is studying at the Caesar Rodney High School in England as a merit scholar. His name is Edward Broadley. Being a scholar, he is very popular in the school. He is popular also because he is a wrestler. Yet the most surprising part of his story is that he is blind. That makes his true story unbelievable.

At the age of nine, he lost vision in both eyes. Right from his birth; he had a cataract in one eye. He subsequently lost its vision completely. He joined the Baltimore School for the blind. The Physical Education Head of the school introduced wrestling to the boy. The teacher explained to him all the niceties, merits and thrills of the game. Broadley was convinced and chose the game in preference to other options.

As is well known, in wrestling one has to play different moves. But for that one must know where the rival is standing and must also see and anticipate his moves. Being blind, that of course was not possible for Broadley. Despite this the boy did not get dejected. He was made from different stuff. On the contrary, he found a solution to the problem. At the start of the game, the boy would spread his hands horizontally and wait for the rival to make a move. The rival would naturally touch Broadley's hands. That was enough for Edward Boardley who would then pounce upon his opponent with full force.

### *The Sightless Wrestler*

It is said that the first punch in wrestling is the most vital, and it makes all the difference for the rest of the game. Being blind, how could Broadley give the first punch? But that hardly posed any problem for him. He says, "I don't think any opponents who can see have the advantage. The person that pulls the first move has the advantage. There is no real gain in being able to see."

What confidence ! It speaks volumes about Edward the wrestler. Usually in wrestling Edward's first move is to try to grab the opponent. He does not like the opponent to get away. As soon as the opponent touches Broadley's hands he attacks him with all the force at his command and grabs him in a solid, steel-like trap. His moves are very quick and effective too. Once the opponent falls in his trap, there is no way out for him except defeat. If the rival disentangles himself from one trap, Edward is ready with another. His strategy is to end the game as quickly as possible, in his victory and in the defeat of the rival.

The Director of the department of physical education of the school, Jim Powell, had once said, "Some people have doubts whether Ed is really blind. He is so fast and so strong..... they can't believe he is unable to see."

Once the bout begins, he successfully locates the position of the rival. Of course, he cannot see where the rival is standing, nor can he hear him. That is because as soon as Broadley makes an appearance in the ring, the crowd gives him a great applause and everything then is drowned in the noise. When he plays the game, his parents, his two brothers and two sisters are in the spectator's gallery. They watch him with pride.

### *The Brave Hearts*

Those who have wrestled with him so far say that he has an iron grip. Once the opponent is in his grip, he plays moves in quick succession, grips the rival in a coil like a python till the rival finally gives up.

Gerald Buckworth says of Edward, "I am still in awe of him. He never talks about his disability. He just goes out with a real positive attitude. And he knows all the moves." And even if Broadley does not know any of the moves, he is very keen to know and learn them.

That is Edward Broadley, a blind wrestler, a twelve-year wonder of the game !



The credit for crossing the 35 km. Catalina Channel from both the sides goes to a lady swimmer.

A thirty year old housewife by the name Greta Anderson achieved this distinction in October 1958. She took 27 hours, 53 minutes and 28 seconds for covering the total distance of about 70 km. both ways.

The Most astonishing part in the case of this long distance swimmer is that some six years before she set upon this task, she was afflicted with a severe attack of rheumatism due to which she was unable even to move her legs for quite some time.

## Never Say Die

---

Lov Gehrig was strong and stoutly built. He was very fond of baseball, a game that requires swiftness. This lad used to make repeated mistakes while playing. Even in small moves, his mistakes were frequent. The whole team had to suffer. Once he committed a major mistake that led to the victory of the rival team.

One of his teammates came to him, removed the gloves he was wearing and threw them at Gehrig and said, "For Gods sake, please give up the game. Every time the team loses because of your mistakes."

Gehrig conceded his mistake and said, "What you say is true, that I have committed a mistake, but I shall take care to see that I make fewer mistakes next time and put up a better show in the game."

Thereafter he went on receiving scolding from his teammates. Yet he continued to work hard. A day came when he achieved the desired success. The lad who used to make repeated mistakes in the game became as strong as a rock and his name started appearing among the leading baseball players of America.



*Lov Gehrig*



Thereafter he played the game for fourteen long years and participated in league matches with distinction. During this period he used to receive injuries intermittently, and yet he did not drop a single match. He used to play with injuries here and there, without bothering about them.



*Lov Gehrig*

During those fourteen years, he was hit by the ball thrice on the head. Once he fractured an ankle bone. On another occasion, he had to be operated upon for a fracture. Four times the little fingers of his right hand received injuries due to a fracture of the bone. Next came the turn of six of his fingers. Once thumb of his right leg was fractured. Then his right shoulder was injured. Often his back was in severe pain due to stiffness in the back. Despite all this, Gehrig played 2130 league matches continuously during the period between June 1925 to April 1939.

As long as the game of baseball continues to be played, Lov Gehrig's record of playing continuously for fourteen years, and that too despite repeated injuries, would remain intact and unscathed.



In December 1981 a few physically handicapped persons covered the distance between Pune and Mumbai within eleven days, walking all the way on crutches. They included three young persons namely Shantilal Anandji Sampat, Gopal Bhanushali and Ashok Arjun Gori.

## A Fighter All The Way

---

Bill Nieder, alias William H. Nieder, was born on 10th August 1933. He held a very stout body weighing 225 Lbs. He was very fond of the game of football. He played for Kansas University of the U.S. and hoped to be included in the All-American football team.

Once while playing the game, his right knee was seriously injured. While trying to stop the fast ball, his knee was so badly hit that he was unable to walk. A number of surgeries were conducted on his knee, but none of them was successful. His right knee became very stiff, so much so that everyone thought that Bill would never be able to play the game again. An ordinary man in his place would have blamed his fate for the disability he suffered and would have reconciled himself to it. But Bill Nieder was a different man. He never wanted to live under the pretext of fate.

Once it so happened that he was watching various games and sports competitions, one of which was that of the discus throw. He wondered if he too could participate in it. He rushed to the ground and started throwing the disc. As he threw the disc again and again, the stiffness of his right leg began to relax, so much so that he could now turn the knee a bit. The doctors had earlier predicted that his knee would never bend again, and that it would remain stiff forever. When Bill saw that he was in a position to turn the knee from one side to the other, he started making more and more efforts in

throwing the disc. Eventually Bill could defeat the greatest player the world had produced in discus throw.

In the 1960 Olympic meet held in Rome, he stood first in the event and won the gold. He was the first athlete in the world who could hurl the 16 lb. iron ball at a distance of 65 ft. and 10 inches. The most astonishing part of the thing is that he could muster maximum strength from his right leg, which the doctors had predicted would remain stiff permanently and therefore would be of no use to him for the whole of his life



*Bill Nieder participating  
in shotput competition*



Three physically impaired persons walked for eleven days on crutches and covered the distance from Pune to Mumbai. These three were - Shantilal Anandji Sampat, Gopal Bhanushali and Ashok Arjun Gori. Shantilal Sampat lost his legs in a truck accident when he was nine-year old. He, then, climbs 700 steps of Mt. Abu and also climbed a mountain near Haji Ali in Mumbai two times. Later he decided to walk the distance from Pune to Mumbai with the help of crutches. He would walk from 8-00 am to 11-00 am and from 3-30 pm to 6-30 pm. He was accompanied by Ashok Gori, who worked in Bank of Maharashtra and Gopal Bhanushali, an LIC agent of Peerless Company.

## Where There Is a Will, There Is A Way

---

Once the 'World News' reported that the achievements of many physically challenged people have been most glaring. In various walks of life, many brave persons, afflicted by various kinds of deformities, have fought as equals with those who were endowed by nature with a healthy body. Similar is the case of Azim Hafeez, a cricketing wonder of Pakistan. There was a cricketer with only one arm with the MCC in the past, but someone who played in a Test match was indeed a unique event.

The Indian cricket team was touring Pakistan in the year 1984. In the very first Test match played at Lahore, this 21 year old left hand medium pacer placed the Indian side in a very tight position. This despite the fact that the Pakistani team then had not selected fast bowlers like Imran Khan and Sarfaraz Nawaz. His 73 deliveries in the first innings of the first Test match created havoc for the Indian team. Bowling after lunch on the third day, he captured six Indian wickets and that changed the entire complexion of the game. When Sunil Gavaskar was at the crease, everyone thought that he would be able to score the twenty-first century of his cricketing career, and his sixth against Pakistan in that innings. But, ill-luck would have it, he was caught by Salim Malik in the square leg in the tenth over, sent by Azim Hafeez. Then in Azim's thirteenth over, Dilip Vengsarkar returned to the pavilion, caught by wicket-keeper Ashraf Ali when the Indian batsman

had scored 41 runs only. The wickets of Sandeep Patil and Ravi Shastri were taken by Azim in his fifteenth and sixteenth overs respectively. Neither of these two batsmen from Mumbai had scored a run. Thus Azim Hafeez pocketed four important Indian wickets in a spell of only 36 balls. Kapil Dev was adjudged LBW in Hafeez's bowling when he had scored only three runs. This was followed by the wickets of Roger Binny and Chetan Sharma. Thus, in a devastating spell of twelve overs and four balls, Azim Hafeez had secured 6 top Indian wickets by conceding only 20 runs. In the second innings too, Azim took one Indian wicket and put up 31 runs in the ninth wicket partnership with Zaheer Abbas in which Azeem's contribution was of 17 runs not out. He was adjudged the 'Man of the Match' in this Test. He succeeded not only in the game of cricket, but also in the game of life.

Born in Zelam, Punjab, Azim Hafeez was born with a physical deformity. He has only a thumb in the palm of his right hand. Three fingers have been missing completely while the small finger is only a ring size joint. Yet Azeem does not consider this as any kind of disability and therefore plays the game unmindful of it. He is not only a good left-hand bowler but also a batsman. He had once scored 70 runs in an intercollegiate cricket competition. As a fielder, he is positioned at 'deep' near the boundary. He says that his right hand palm is so strong that it helps him fully in holding a catch with his left hand. However, while trying to sieze a ball coming towards his right side, he has to move his left hand a little more. He holds a fairly good record of catching. While batting, he wears special type of gloves.

Azeem is suffering from yet another disability. His right hand is shorter by three inches than his left hand. That is why he has to exert more while bowling with his left hand. Despite all this, he does not suffer from any inferiority complex, nor

does he consider these disabilities as any kind of obstacles in his game. After putting up a great show in the Lahore Test against India in 1984, he followed it up by taking 5 wickets conceding only 127 runs in the first innings against the New Zealand team in the Test played at Wellington in New Zealand in the year 1985. He thus created yet more havoc, this time on a foreign soil. The career record of this young player shows that in 18 Test matches he has taken 63 wickets by sending 4375 balls. He has the distinction of taking 5 wickets four times in a single innings. What is more important is the fact that this one-handed wonder has established unique records in a game like cricket, which requires the use of both the hands, by surpassing his physical deformities.



The blind and the visually impaired people can not only participate in Golf but can compete with those endowed with sight. Golf was popularised in the west for the blind and Blind Golfer Championship was organised in America. There are more than 100 blind golfers in England.

One such golfer David Benwale became blind when he was eight-year old. He used to accompany his golf-loving friends and his interest in the game got enkindled. Another blind golfer Ron Tomlinson helped him to play golf and that was a turning point in his life.

He became an ace golfer. About ten years ago, David Benwell was in India and his performance in the Delhi Golf Club won the admiration of the spectators present.

## Bent But Not Broken

---

Charlie Boswell had the reputation of a first rank player in baseball as well as football. He played both games as a professional. He was in great demand and used to earn a lot of money by playing the two games.

During the Second World War, Boswell was conscripted into the army as a soldier. He shifted his activities from the field of games to the battlefield. He was sent to Europe to fight the Germans. In one of the battles, his tank received heavy shelling from the enemy. The tank caught fire. Although Boswell was well protected inside the tank, he saw his fellow soldiers suffering serious wounds. He jumped out of his tank to save them from the impending jaws of death. He could save most of them, but could not extricate himself from the raging fire. And then another shell hit him. He was thrown a few metres away with a thud.

By this time he had received serious burns. Many of the bones in his body were broken. His fellow soldiers shifted him to a military hospital in a serious condition.

Boswell regained consciousness after a week. It was then that he realised that he had lost both of his eyes because of the impact of the enemy shelling.

For a moment Boswell was shaken to find himself in that condition. He realised too that for him it was the end of his sports career. He would not be able to play his favourite games

any more. He would not be able even to see others play. It was difficult for Boswell to reconcile himself to that fate.

Even after being discharged from hospital, Boswell was unable to walk without support. He would stumble again and again. He was the same Boswell who used to run on the ground from one end to another earlier. Now the situation had taken a different turn. His wife used to give him both mental and physical support. She would ask him to pray.



*Charlie Boswell*

One day a friend of Boswell came to meet him. During their conversation, the friend said to Boswell, "Dear friend, Do you want to play golf? You will enjoy it very much, and it will be entertaining."

Charlie replied with grief in his tone, "I do want to play, but how can I without eyes? When I cannot see anything, how can I hit the ball?"

His friend assured Boswell that he would help him in the game. One day, he took Boswell to a golf course. He put the golf club in Charlie's hand and indicated to him the place where the ball was kept. Boswell hit the ball so accurately and stylishly that it almost reached the desired destination. Gradually, Boswell developed an interest in the game and started practising on his own.

In time, Charlie Boswell became an expert golfer. A day



### *The Brave Hearts*

came when he became the world champion in golf in the competitions organised for the physically challenged and disabled players. This feat he achieved with sheer effort and perseverance. This made him more determined and the passion to live and play got enkindled.



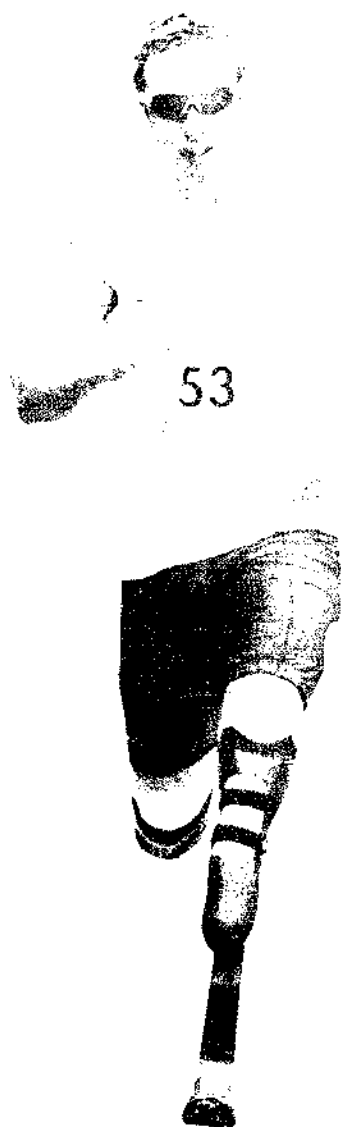
Born in January 12, 1940 in Christchurch in New Zealand, Richard Charles Motz was known as a fast bowler who hit sixes. He was the captain of his Linwood High School team for two years and in four innings he scored three centuries and an unbeaten seventy six.

He was only seventeen when he was selected for first class cricket tournament and playing for New Zealand, Motz bowled with ferocity in the scorching heat of Kolkata and bitter cold of Edgbaston.

His outswingers baffled the batsmen as the ball would move off the pitch uncannily. His wife Loretta Todd was a fast right-arm bowler and hard-hitting batsman but illness cost her place in the New Zealand women's team. He was the first New Zealand bowler to capture a hundred wickets in test cricket.

His body later became invalid as some illness struck his spinal cord and he could not bowl fast. This did not deter him and in the last eighteen months of his cricketing career, he captured 24 of the 100 wickets he had taken, notwithstanding the disability.

# THE BRAVE HEARTS



'The Brave Hearts' is a saga of those ordinary people who struggled in the face of almost unsurmountable odds and ultimately triumphed.

The book delineates the stories of those brave hearts, the sports persons, who raced against obstacles and succeeded by dint of indomitable will, supreme courage and determination.

A physically challenged person can become a teacher or a musician, but how can a person excel in sports which demand extraordinary physical fitness and strength? The present volume narrates the feats achieved by people who defied the stars and notched up victories.

These are true stories written in a lucid and simple style and they all make an interesting and inspirational reading. It has a telling message - learn to live with disabilities, don't shed tears but defy and triumph.

Five editions of the books in Gujarati and three edition in Hindi have already been published. Its Braille version and a CD have also been brought out.