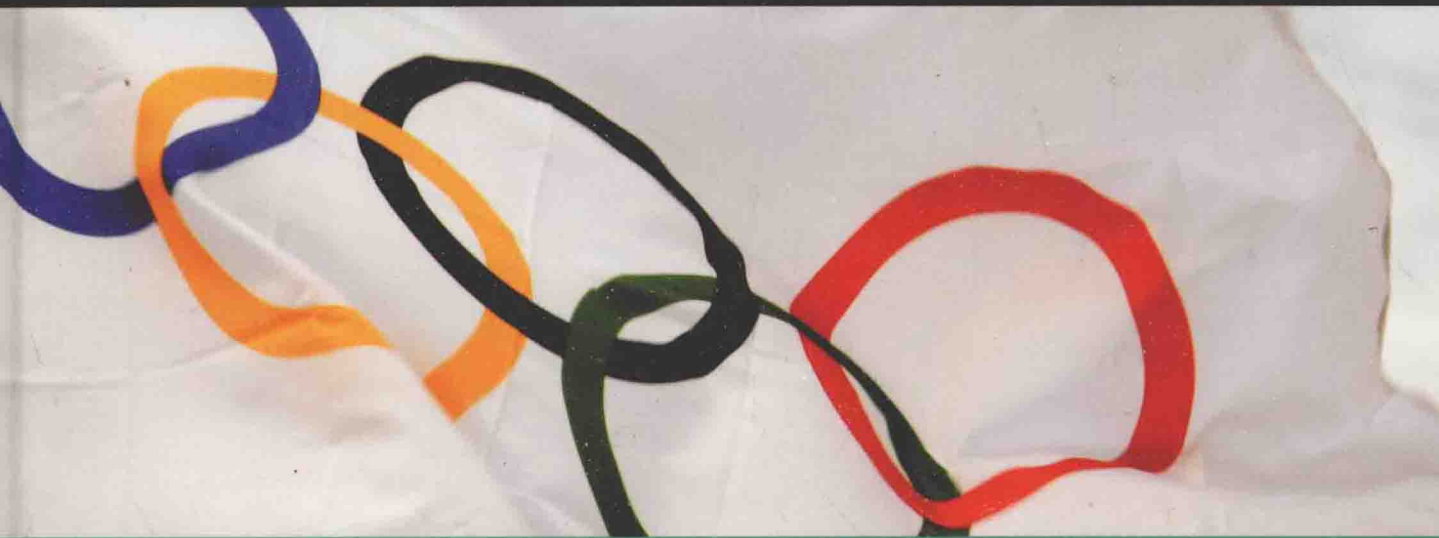


GREAT ATHLETES



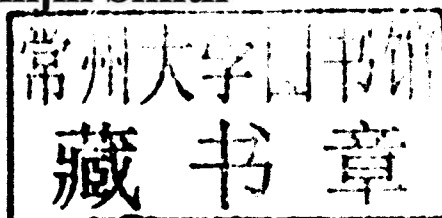
OLYMPIC SPORTS

GREAT ATHLETES

OLYMPIC SPORTS

Volume 3

Steve Lundquist–Sinjin Smith



Edited by

The Editors of Salem Press

Special Consultant

Rafer Johnson

SALEM PRESS

Pasadena, California

Hackensack, New Jersey

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∞ The paper used in these volumes conforms to the American National Standard for Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, Z39.48-1992 (R1997).

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Great athletes / edited by The Editors of Salem Press ; special consultant Rafer Johnson.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-58765-473-2 (set : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-58765-483-1 (vol. 1 olympic sports : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-58765-484-8 (vol. 2 olympic sports : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-58765-485-5 (vol. 3 olympic sports : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-58765-486-2 (vol. 4 olympic sports : alk. paper) — ISBN 978-1-58765-487-9 (set olympic sports : alk. paper)

I. Athletes—Biography—Dictionaries. I. Johnson, Rafer, 1935- II. Salem Press.

GV697.A1G68 2009

796.0922—dc22

[B]

2009021905

First Printing

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GREAT ATHLETES

OLYMPIC SPORTS

Steve Lundquist

Swimming

Born: February 20, 1961
Atlanta, Georgia

Also known as: Stephen Kent Lundquist (full name); Lunk

Early Life

Born on February 20, 1961, in Atlanta, Georgia, Stephen Kent Lundquist grew up in the small town of Jonesboro, Georgia, on the shores of Jonesboro's Lake Spivey. Living so close to the water had a strong impact on Steve; he was waterskiing and swimming as soon as he learned how to walk.

Eventually, his affinity for swimming grew and he began to train in the lake to the point that he needed better facilities in order to improve. However, there was no indoor pool in Jonesboro or the surrounding towns. His father, understanding the importance of adequate facilities for Steve's development, built a pool for his son on land donated by a man named Al Tallman. This was the beginning of the Tallman swim team, for which Steve swam during high school.

The Road to Excellence

During his early years of age-group swimming in Jonesboro, Steve, nicknamed "Lunk" by his friends, worked on developing a new style of starting a race that came to be known as the "pike" start. Rather than leaving the starting blocks with his back straight and parallel to the water, as in the traditional racing start, Steve would jump in an arc with his body jackknifed. This motion would take him both higher in the air and farther over the water than other swimmers, giving him an initial head start in the race.

Steve's early swimming success culminated in his first world record, set in 1978, at the age of seventeen. At the 1978 Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) Long Course (50-meter pool) Championships, Steve broke the world record in the 200-meter individual medley (50 meters of each stroke). A year later, at the AAU Short Course (25-meter pool) Championships, he followed up with a world record in the 200-

meter breaststroke, becoming the first to break the two-minute mark.

Steve's early success in swimming led to cockiness; during his senior year at Jonesboro High School, Steve decided to play football rather than swim. His lack of training led him to miss the finals of the 100-meter breaststroke at the Long Course Championships just before his freshman year of college. His attitude improved in college, however, through his association with his roommate J. D. Browder, who was 4 feet 7 inches tall. Browder's positive outlook and buoyant spirit in the face of physical difficulties inspired Steve by giving him a different perspective on his own success.

The Emerging Champion

Steve was prohibited from participating in the 1980 Olympics as a result of the U.S. boycott of the Games. Nevertheless, he regained his winning edge, grabbing five National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Championships during his first three



Steve Lundquist swimming in the 1984 Olympic Games in Los Angeles. (Courtesy of International Swimming Hall of Fame)

years of college at Southern Methodist University, while working toward a degree in business.

In 1982, Steve broke the world record in the 100-meter breaststroke twice and won gold medals in the 100-meter breaststroke and the 4×100-meter medley relay—an event in which each of four team members swims 100 meters in one of the four strokes. In recognition of his superior performance that year, Steve was named the U.S. swimmer of the year by the national governing body of swimming. The next year brought continued success, this time at the Pan-American Games in Caracas, Venezuela, where he won gold in the 100- and 200-meter breaststroke and the 4×100-meter medley relay, as well as a bronze in the 200-meter individual medley.

Riding this wave of success, Steve seemed primed for success at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. However, the September before the Games, he suffered a severe shoulder separation while waterskiing. His injury caused him to finish poorly at the 1984 U.S. Swimming Indoor Championships—he placed 26th in the 100-meter breaststroke. The outlook seemed bleak for the upcoming Olympics.

Continuing the Story

The same enthusiasm and energy that had perhaps contributed to past excesses—like overconfidence or aggressive waterskiing—were needed in order

Major Swimming Championships

Year	Competition	Event	Place	Time
1978	World Championships	100-meter breaststroke	7th	—
		200-meter individual medley	4th	—
1979	Pan-American Games	100-meter breaststroke	1st	1:03.82
		200-meter breaststroke	1st	2:21.97
		4×100-meter medley relay	1st	3:47.20
1980	NCAA Championships	100-yard breaststroke	1st	53.59
		200-yard breaststroke	2d	—
		200-yard individual medley	2d	—
1981	NCAA Championships	100-yard breaststroke	1st	52.93
		200-yard breaststroke	1st	1:55.01
1982	World Championships	100-meter breaststroke	1st	1:02.75
		200-meter individual medley	7th	2:06.22
		4×100-meter medley relay	1st	3:40.84
	NCAA Championships	100-yard breaststroke	1st	53.09
		200-yard breaststroke	1st	1:56.84
		200-yard individual medley	2d	—
1983	Pan-American Games	100-meter breaststroke	1st	1:02.28 WR, PAR
		200-meter breaststroke	1st	2:19.31 PAR
		200-meter individual medley	3d	2:06.36
		4×100-meter medley relay	1st	3:40.42
	NCAA Championships	100-yard breaststroke	1st	52.48
		200-yard individual medley	1st	1:45.54
1984	Olympic Games	100-meter breaststroke	Gold	1:01.65 WR, NR, OR
		4×100-meter medley relay	Gold	3:39.30 WR, OR

Notes: OR = Olympic Record; WR = World Record; NR = National Record; PAR = Pan-American Record

for Steve to regain his winning form. He fought back, with the help of his team trainer, Dr. Ted Becker, and the inspiration of teammate John Moffet. As a result of Becker's therapy and Moffet's competition and encouragement, Steve was stunningly successful in Los Angeles. He won gold in the 100-meter breaststroke, breaking the world record for the fifth time in two years. He was also a member of the U.S. gold medal medley relay team, which also set a new world record. Steve's success at the Olympics marked the end of his career in competitive swimming. Even prior to the 1984 Olympics, he had said that, at twenty-three years old, he felt old for the sport. He claimed that he would have retired in 1980 if not for the U.S. boycott of the 1980 Games.

Steve managed to remain in the lime-light. His athletic, all-American good looks brought him modeling contracts for *Vanity Fair*, *L'Homme Vogue*, and *Interview* magazines in 1983-1984. He then moved on to

Records

Broke world and American records on 15 occasions

Set world records in the 100-meter breaststroke and 200-meter individual medley

Set American records in the 100- and 200-yard and meter breaststrokes

Honors and Awards

1980 Men's U.S. Olympic Swimming Team

1982 U.S. Swimming Swimmer of the Year

1990 Inducted into International Swimming Hall of Fame

film work, getting parts in *Return of the Killer Tomatoes* (1988) and *Earth Girls Are Easy* (1989). He has managed to combine his college training in business, his brief flash of Olympic stardom, and his looks and acting talent into a promising new profession. In 1996, he was the flag bearer at the Atlanta Olympic Games. He also became involved with numerous charity organizations.

Summary

Over the course of his career, Steve Lundquist managed to combine his exceptional natural ability with a strong sense of determination and commitment and a good dose of all-around intensity. His intensity created some problems for him, but he was able to learn from his mistakes and from the

experiences of others. As a result, he persevered over a relatively long and successful reign as swimming's premier breaststroker and made the difficult transition to a second career in business.

Mark Rogers

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