

1968 U.S. Olympic Team Oral History Project: Transcript of Interview

Interviewer: Thomas Hunt

Narrator: Doug Russell, 1968 Olympic Games, Swimming

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[begin recording]

[Thomas M. Hunt:] All right. This is a oral history interview with Doug Russell. Thomas Hunt is here along with Scot Jedlicka, Laken Litman, Trinity Gibbons, and Raquel Hutchinson. Okay. Well, Doug, we just mentioned that you're from Midland. How did you get in to sports and what did you do early on?

[Doug Russell:] Well, I grew up in a broken home. I was raised by my mother and my grandmother. Okay? Part of it was that I guess I basically ran the streets. In other words, after school we played football or baseball or whatever. On the weekends, I'd go up to the park and there'd always be a group of guys show up. Sometimes I talk, I tell them that that was one of my first athletic—one of my greatest athletic performances because when you go to the park, they choose up teams. And the guy that gets chosen last is generally the weakest player or the youngest or the slowest or, you know, something like that. And then if there's an odd number you—I was usually that guy. (laughter)

Right. Okay? So you've been there and done that. So I remember the first time I was waiting for my mom to come home on Saturday night—'cause she worked on Saturdays—to tell her that I didn't get chosen last. In the summer times, I was kind of a latchkey kid. My mother would give

me a quarter in the morning and I would ride my bicycle, literally, the shortest distance between two points, is a straight line. So I'd ride across the desert to Hogan Park pool in Midland, Texas to swim, 'cause I'd swim all day long. And the quarter—ten cents got me in and left me fifteen cents for a coke and a candy bar, essentially, okay? Which now-a-days people would be going, oh, you know, What are the nutritional values in that? But anyway, I liked to be the first one there. I mean, I busted my hinny to get there first every day, okay? Because I'd pay my ten cents and run through the dressing room, hit the showers and I'd be the first one on the deck. And I would run and jump in the pool and race the ripples to the other end, okay? And you know, by the time I got to the other end there were at least thirty-four thousand people standing and cheering a victory. So, you know, there's no lonely victories type of thing.

Then one day, a coach came and asked if I wanted to be on the swim team and I'd get to swim from five to seven and race and stuff like that. You know, I'm all for that. So that's basically kind of how it got started.

[TMH:] Yeah. Now did you play basketball? Am I remembering that right, as well?

[DR] I played basketball in high school. We had—um—my mother remarried and we moved to Fort Worth just before I started the eighth grade. And in Fort Worth is where I started on the Panther Boys Club team and that's where I met Don Easterling who'd be my coach basically throughout my whole swimming career. And it's where I started swimming year-round. In the winters we swam at the YMCA downtown. So I had to ride the bus downtown and then walk eight blocks to the YMCA. And one of my jobs was to go in and hurry out all the naked guys swimming because there was no swimsuit then. They all swam in the buff and so I would hurry

them all out so I could open the inside door so that the girls could come out. It was a four lane, twenty-yard pool and it was probably in the neighborhood of eighty-four, eighty-five degrees, so about halfway through the workout you were—. I mean I literally remember lying on the deck on my stomach with my heels behind my ears from cramps. Then I had to walk back to the bus. This was like 9:00, 9:15 at night and it was on the bad end of town. I always envisioned a Texas chainsaw guy out there. If Stephen King could've gotten in my head, he'd have had some great stories. But once I got on the bus, I was safe, okay? But, when I got home—.

My mother had remarried a guy named Curtis Wright and he was an alcoholic and I mean alcoholics, you know, they like drink every night and he was not a happy drunk. He was a mean drunk. So when I got home, going up the stairs to the house, you know, you never knew kind of what you were gonna—. When you opened that door you didn't know what the situation was. There was many a night that I literally had to fight to get him in bed and quit tearing things up and that sort of thing.

So that kind of ended at the beginning of my sophomore year and we went back to Midland and we lived at my grandmother's house. My mom and I shared a room. I had a mattress underneath the bed that I'd pull out at night and make the bed, sleep, in the morning fold it all up and put it back. That was my sophomore year and I won two state championships, set a national high school record, made high school All-American. And then that summer, Don had taken a job at Arlington State University, it was in the A&M system. And so I went back to Arlington and lived in his home that summer and trained for the national championships. So there's a lot of stories there.

But anyway, I got to the national championships and my best event then was the 200 Individual Medley. The medley is where you swim all four strokes: fly, back, breast, and freestyle. That was my best event at that particular time. We stayed in Concordia Teacher's College, in the dorm. We had to take our own sheets and pillowcases and stuff with us. And we walked to the pool—and it was like an eight or ten block walk—and we walked through this shopping center and they had a big kiosk—or whatever you want to call it—out front where they had a display of all the medals. Well, at that time, they only gave medals to the top six. So the day before the 200 I.M., I swam the 400 I.M. which was saying something. I was a sprinter, okay? You know ninety was great. One-hundred was okay. One-hundred-and-five was way too far. So the 400 I.M. was not particularly my best event but I qualified eighth for the finals as a sixteen-year-old kid, which was pretty good. So came back that night in the finals and they're introducing the swimmers and stuff and I'm sitting there and there's a track that runs along—I'm in lane one—and there's a track that runs along there. And it was for the little tram thing that had the TV camera for "Wide World of Sports." So I'm sitting there going, Can I swim fast enough to get into that sixth hole and get one of those medals? Or do I go for the TV time? Finally I decided that I couldn't get in that sixth hole so I just said, The hell with it. I'm going for TV time 'cause I was a butterflyer and backstroker and those are the first two strokes of the medley.

So at the 200 mark, halfway through, I'm like a half stroke off the world record holder, Tom Tretheway from Indiana. Then I'd swim breaststroke, which is my worst stroke. So anyway, after the race I come to coach Easterling and you know, "Aaah! You went out way too fast!"

You'd have to know Don. Don was—. Almost everything was prefaced with an F-bomb or two. That's just the way he was, you know? He said, "You're way out too fast! You're not thinking!" You know, stuff like that. What was my split at 200 or 210 or whatever it was? I forget what it was. And I'm going, Gosh, that's cool—two minutes and ten seconds on national TV! You knew they had to be talking.

The next day I swam the 200 I.M. and I qualified fourth. And this was in '63, the year before the '64 Games. And they take three, okay? So pretty good position, but I got disqualified. I dipped a shoulder on a turn and got the D.Q. In those days, they came around, told the swimmer, and the swimmer relayed it. So I walked down the deck and the coach—he's all pumped up and stuff—and I had to tell him that I got disqualified. And he—I got ripped from one end to the other. You know, it was character issues, and training issues, and mental issues. There wasn't much left on the bone after he got—. And I had spent that summer in his home. He had two daughters—great kids—but I didn't have anything in common with them. I'd basically given up the summer. My mother had to work two and three jobs to keep me funded to go on trips and stuff like that, you know. It was hard.

So I got back to Midland and I basically said, Screw it. It's not worth it to have the coach talk to you that way and to disappoint your mom and that sort of stuff so I went out and played high school basketball. I was a pretty good basketball player. I made All-District. But that led to things that I learned. Basketball season would be over and they had like two weeks before the district meet and then another week before the state's. So I'd go out and swim. So my junior year

I won the state championship. My senior year I won a state championship, still made All-American but I wasn't training swimming and stuff.

My junior year, there was one returning senior—Randy Kerr, 6'10", went to TCU. There was nobody else that had lettered or even had varsity experience so it was kind of like wide-open. We used to go to the YMCA every night and all of us would play until they ran us off at night—10:00, 10:30. I finally went to coach Spears and asked him if he could open up the gym at six in the morning. I'm a swimmer—kind of a swimmer mentality. We could shoot free throws and stuff before school and stuff like that. He said, "Hell no, I ain't getting up at six in the morning but here's the key."

So I opened that gym every morning and it's cold in an old gym but we went in there every morning. And we ended up getting second in district and one shot with five seconds left kept us from going to the state tournament. And we were picked to be last and to be terrible and that sort of thing. Well, during the next year, there'd be half the guys there. There'd be two or three guys there. Pretty soon, I was the only one left and we had four returning starters. We were picked to win the district. We ended up something like fourteen and twelve and it was a big disappointment. We were like third in the district—third or fourth in the district. And you know, I wanted to be the best athlete that I could be but I wasn't willing—I wasn't going to go the team route anymore. I had some basketball offers and stuff, you know? I want to do something where if I get the job done, I do good; if I don't, my bad, you know? That sort of thing.

[TMH:] You've got just yourself to rely on.

[DR:] That's right. And so I wrote coach Easterling a letter and told him that I wanted to swim again. Didn't hear anything—nothing—two or three weeks. Then I got a letter in the mail with a full scholarship to Arlington State. Somehow he had—that was the year he had just started the program and Arlington State basically just swam high schools. They didn't swim any other universities. My first year at Arlington State was the second year of the program. So anyway, it was a letter of intent and up in the corner was like a little Post-It thing that says, "Be here on June 3rd, Don". No "I'm glad you're going to swim again; kiss my fanny." Nothing, just that.

So I went to the Midland High School all-night party and then the next night I got on the all-night bus from Midland to Arlington, Texas. Ya'll should take one of those trips some time because you stop in every little bo-honk town between here and Midland. I mean, it's like it's literally three-hundred miles; it's like an eleven-hour bus ride. It just takes forever. You get going up speed and then you gotta pull over and stop in another little town.

So I got off the bus and I had my suitcase and I had a footlocker. And you know who was there to meet me? Nobody. So I talked the bus guy into keeping my footlocker and he gave me the directions. I said, "Well, how far is the campus?"

And he said, "It's about two miles that way."

So I had my suitcase and my swim bag. So I'm walking up the back to the gate to the swimming pool and I hear, "You're 'F'—ing fifteen minutes late!" You know, that's the way he was. So I got in the water and stated swimming. So that's basically how I got—.

[TMH:] Off the bus and into the pool.

[DR:] Off the bus and into the pool. So the first year getting back in to it, trying to do year-round stuff was pretty hard. In '67 we had—. Arlington State became the University of Texas at Arlington. They switched them from A&M system to the UT system. So we became the University of Texas at Arlington. And we were Division II, which meant that for us to get to Division I, to the NCAA championships, that we had to go through Division II. So everything we did, we had to do like twice, you know? Sophomore year we went to the college division championships and we took five swimmers and got third, something like that; it was pretty good. Then the next year, in '67, we took a complete team to Emory College for the college divisions and we got second—missed by eleven points, or something like that, from winning. Then went to the NAAs. I won an event, set an NCAA record and Rick Nesbitt won the 100 breaststroke and our medley relay. Anyway, we ended up getting seventh, like the third year of the program—fourth year. Texas Arlington got seventh ahead of people like SC and Stanford, you know, and they're going, Whoa!

That summer was a good summer. I'd gone to the college divisions; I'd gone to the NCAA, set an NCAA record and then the short course nationals were at SMU, which is just twenty miles down the road. I didn't want to swim because I was just worn out and stuff like that. Don just insisted and insisted. I went; I got two thirds and a fourth and I made the Pan-Am team.

[TMH:] This is in 1967?

[DR:] Yeah, '67. The Pan-Am team—the two guys that beat me in the I.M. were from Stanford. In their frat house they got some kind of poisoning or something like that. And so anyway, they couldn't train so they couldn't swim, so I got bumped up to swim the 200 I.M. The 200 I.M.—.

When we got to—. We were in Winnipeg, Canada. They'd built a brand new pool for the Pan-American Games. So when we got there, we went to the pool and when we walk in—and there was a score board about three times the size of—. It looked like the darn Dallas Cowboys scoreboard. That's what it looked like to me. It was huge. Anyway, it had pulled loose from one end and it hung down over the pool—didn't go into the pool—pulled loose and it was like this far off of the water in lane five. Okay? I had a good mental picture of thing falling down. So anyway, I swam the preliminaries of the two-hundred I.M. and I qualified third behind two Canadians. This is in Winnipeg, Canada. I didn't feel good and I got really tight at the end and you know, it wasn't a good swim.

And so anyway, I grab my stuff and I go back. We stayed at a military base, in bunks. I went and found a phone. I had a handful of change. Well, Don was in San Antonio. They had a brewery there, the Lone Star brewery. Probably you guys/girls don't drink so you probably don't know Lone Star beer and stuff like that back in the day. Okay. And this was a spring-fed pool and it was deep so it was a really fast swimming pool and they always had like our Texas senior championships there. So Don was there with the team. It was on a Saturday. So I call. Nobody's at the switchboard and I call back and I finally get the guardhouse. I'm distraught and I'm telling this guard—I'm twenty years old, twenty-one years old, crying. Anyway, he was really nice and he went down and he found Don and he brought him back so I had this conversation, you know, and we talked about the race and stuff like that. And calmed me down, you know, and I hadn't shaved down yet. He said, "Well, you shave down?" And I said, "No, I haven't shaved yet."

So I went back to the dorm and I did shave down. So I came back that night and they do all the introductions and stuff. Well, it's Canadians, right? The design was the old—. If you're around arenas and swimming pools and stuff like that back east, everything is real—you know, it's vertical where we're more like this. So everybody's like right on top of you. So we take your mark, shoot the gun, we jump in. In the water, you can hear, on both sides of you, the Canadians are stamping their feet and you can feel it in the water. I take about three strokes and I'm going, What if they pull that scoreboard loose? 'Cause I'm in lane five.

[TMH:] It's going to be a lot of electricity!

[DR:] So I swim really fast to get where I think that scoreboard is because it's directly above me, okay? So then you butterfly. So I've touched and I'm swimming back and on your back you can—your ears on not completely under the water—so you can really hear the screaming and hollering going on, okay? And so here comes that scoreboard, so I'm just (makes a sound as if swimming with effort) like that, you know? And then I get to the breaststroke and it just seemed like—. Now, you swim breaststroke, your head's up a lot so you can really—. Like, the noise got really loud. I see the scoreboard coming up, you know, big, and try to get by it. So I get to the one set, 150 mark, and I'm going, Doug, you're swimming the 200 I.M., the finals! So I look around finally, I'm like two body lengths ahead.

[TMH:] Nothing like a little motivation!

[DR:] That's right. So anyway, I end up winning and I missed the world record by two-tenths of a second. But that was the place where I kind of got to elite status as far as world swimming was

concerned, okay? That was a pretty significant performance right there. And, you know, three-quarters of it, I was thinking about something completely different than swimming.

[TMH:] Right. You were struggling to stay alive.

[DR:] Right. So anyway, then after that I came back and I had about two weeks then we had our national championships. I went to the national championship and I made the World Student Games, okay? I got beat by Mark in the 100 fly but I'd gotten—.

Let me go back to the Pan American Games. I made the team as an alternate. I didn't have a spot. But alternates go and they train and then you can go to the—. Then at some point, either in training camp or when you first get to the site, they have swim-offs for the relays, okay? So I had made up my mind that I thought the best spot for me to get on the relay was the backstroke. So I swam the backstroke and beat everybody so I was on the backstroke of the medley relay. But I still—. Butterfly was my love.

So anyway, I made the World Student Games trip and that was like in three weeks or something like that. So I'd gone to NCAAs, Pan-Am, National Championships; now I was going to the World Student Games, which the competition was not—. There was an age requirement. Even though Mark beat me, I went to represent the United States because Mark at that time was just too young. He went on another trip somewhere, I forget.

But anyway, I went to the—. I swam the 100 backstroke and I broke the world record in the preliminaries. So I sat around all day long hoping that Tom Hickcox—who was from Indiana—would not beat me at night and beat my world. I just hoped he wouldn't beat my world record. I

didn't care if he beat me yet. So I sat around all day long. So I held the world record like six hours 'cause he beat me and lowered the world record. So then I was really like pissed at myself, you know, for sitting around, you know, being that weak, you know, thinking. So then the next day, I broke the world record in the 100 butterfly. So it was like my third rest, tape, or shape.

So anyway, now we're headed to the Olympics. Swimming in the United States then was West Coast-Big Ten which is Indiana, Michigan, Michigan State, you know, those guys. And Yale had some really good swimmers. But I was actually the first Texan to ever make an Olympic team in an individual bid in swimming. But there was no swimming in the middle of the country and there was no real swimming in Florida, you know. It was just those two centers of competitive swimming.

Prior to Mexico City, Mark and I had raced in 100 butterfly nine times. In those nine races, I was ahead at 50, I was head at 75, I was ahead at 90, I was ahead at 95. I lost all nine races. He beat me three times by one-tenth of a second and never more than five-tenths of a second. So I was always there. He got to the wall, his arms are here and mine were back here. And Mark never considered me a competitor, okay? Even though at that particular time he and I had broken the world record and had shared the world record for a while. We were going 55s in the 100 butterfly. The next fastest guy was a high 57. There was just the two of us, okay? But yet, he never really considered me a threat, okay?

In '64, a guy named Don Schollander won four gold medals in the Tokyo Olympic Games. That matched—for the first time—that matched what Jesse Owens had done in 1936. He swam for Santa Clara swim club and George Haines. Going in to '68, that's where Mark swam. Don

Schollander actually made the '68 team and swam on a relay. But anyway, Mark—. All of the hype going into Mexico City on the swimming end was Mark was going to win six gold medals: the three relays, the 100 and 200 fly, and 100 freestyle. So that was all the—you know—that's all anybody ever talked about. So in that conversation, there was the attitude that there wasn't really anybody to stop him. Okay? So that meant that I was like maybe chopped liver or something like that. I don't know.

When I went to the Pan American Games, we went to the University of Minneapolis to train and I got off the airplane and—they were picking me up at the airplane—and I got off. I had my corduroy pants on. I mean, I had the—came down to about here with my white socks and my sneakers, my Converse, okay. I mean I was—I was a hick from the sticks. I mean there's no—. That's just the way it was, okay? And there was another guy coming in. His name was Ken Walsh from Michigan State. So Gus Stager, one of the coaches, had picked us up and he said, "Well do you mind if you guys roommate?" And I didn't care. I mean, I didn't know anybody. Nobody knew me. So I said I'm fine with that. Well Ken was kinda like the corporate executive type. First of all, he was a senior at Michigan State and the summer before he had set the world record in the 100 freestyle. So he was like the world's fastest swimmer. So he looked at me for a second and he choked out a, "Yeah, I guess it's okay." He was carrying a putter and he hands me his putter and I took the putter. After that it was Batman and Robin, you know, that kind of thing. And during our time at the Pan American Games there was a French newspaper or somebody was doing an article on Ken being the world's fastest, so they did interviews and took some pictures at different places and stuff and I always went along carrying the bag and the putter. That was—you know. But Ken was a godsend really. We got to be good friends. But

anyway, he was my roommate in Mexico City. He was on also on the Tokyo team and we were roommates at Tokyo. We got to know each other pretty well.

But anyway, so, the whole Olympic thing is—. First of all, I'm not going to tell you that my whole purpose in life was to make the Olympic team because I can tell you that was not my focus. The Olympic Games to me represented the next time I got to race Mark. It could have been in Waxahachie and it wouldn't have made a bit of difference. It could have been the 100 butterfly in the Brazos. It didn't make any difference. I wanted to be the world's fastest butterfly, no question, even if it were for just that long. An Olympic team is a big deal. So, that whole summer training, all my family and friends add to was, "Oh! You're gonna make it!"

Well, the thing about the Olympic Games is that they have the Olympic trials and you go swim so you have one race to make the team. They could care less what you've done in the past. It makes no difference. You could have done nothing in the past but that night—. And there's case after case after case of people not making the team that probably should have made the team or could have made the team and people making the team that you've never heard of. And we had one of those that swam with us— Ronnie Mills. He was a sophomore at Arlington Heights high school in Forth Worth and he was a backstroker—big kid, goofy kid. His nickname on our team was Ronnie Sue. You can take from that what you want. But anyway, he made the team. He got third place in the Olympic trials and made the team. He ended up going and getting a third place in the Olympics and got a bronze medal.

The Olympic trials were in—. They built a brand new pool on the beach in Long Beach. And we're going up the front stairs and the altitude was obviously a big conversation as far as Mexico

City was concerned. So we're going up the stairs. This pool is literally on the beach. It's not in a fenced area or anything like that, so you go up the stairs or you can go left fifty yards and you're knee deep in the ocean. So we're going up the stairs and Ronnie says, "Coach, what's the altitude here?" (laughs) Coach just looks at him. He goes back down the stairs and he's on one knee and he's looking at the ocean, "Ronnie, I think it's like six f*in' inches." (laughter) From the altitude—. That was Ronnie Sue, okay?

Now Ronnie Sue had just been elected cheerleader, so he made the Olympic team in the 100 back, alright? We're going down the same stairs, going down to the cars and Ronnie's going, "Coach, I can't go. I can't go to the Olympic Games."

He turned, "What?"

He said, "Well, I looked at the schedule and we have football games on that weekend."

"Oh."

That was another—. (laughter) But anyway, that was Ronnie Sue.

So anyway, the 100 butterfly was the first event. And I went to Santa Clara invitational in the summertime. And where else did I go? I went somewhere else.

Anyway, I'd won a Pan American gold medal in the 200 IM. I had set the world record—second man to break a minute for a 100 backstroke and then on to butterfly. Well, the way the schedule's set up, they call it an impossible double. I couldn't—if I swam the 100 butterfly—could not swim the 200 IM or the 100 back. So I had to choose between 200 IM and 100 back or the 100 butterfly. So it was never a decision for me. It was 100 butterfly the whole way.

Well, I kept getting letters and coaches coming up to me, “Why would you—. You’re not going to go—.”

I’d say, “No.” We may enter ‘em, but I—. You know, if I don’t make the team in the 100 butterfly, then it might become an issue, but that’s all I want to do. I just—.

“How could you give up an opportunity for two medals for one?”

And I said, “Well, it’s real easy. It’s all I want to swim,” you know?

So the hundred butterfly was the first event and I was the second guy to make the team, ‘cause Mark beat me in the finals of 100 butterfly. I was fastest seed coming out. So, everybody’s jumping up and down and I thought I had him this time. I’m sitting there, literally just cussing and beating on the block. You know, throwing little personal tantrum type thing, you know?

So anyway, I know that in the press conference in ’68 I was the third oldest guy on the team at twenty-two. In Beijing, I would have been the third youngest guy on the team. That’s how much swimming has changed over the years. Anyway, somebody asked me, “How long you going to swim? Is this going to be your last competition?” I said, “No, I’m going to swim until I beat Mark.” (laughter) I don’t know how long it’s going to take, but you know, that’s it. Mark and I, we never talked. There were a couple of times. I could tell you about them.

But anyway, we went off to—. We trained at the Air Force Academy, okay? One week before— I saw in here there’s a question about like drug testing.

[TMH:] Um-hm.

[DR:] Okay. I will tell you that if it would have helped me swim faster I would have done anything or taken anything. I was a pill poppin' fool, okay? Somebody brought me an article where vitamin E would help the body assimilate oxygen, okay? And you had to like take two pills a day. Well, if you take two and it helps you, then what will ten do? I'm dead serious. I took my vitamins. I was taking all the B vitamins. I even got sophisticated enough that I carried around—. When I showed up in Mexico City, I had a brown bag with syringes and B12. Okay? I went to the medical offices and took my little brown bag. I worked back from my race, every two days I got a B12 shot. So the guy's giving me my B12 shot and he's going, "You know this doesn't really do anything." I said, "Shut the f***k up. I don't care. All I know is, you know, you shoot me up. That's all I need to know. You can put water in there or coca-cola or whatever you want to. Just give me my shot and I'll go on my way." Okay. So I mean I—. You know if horse patties would have—I'd have snacked on those. (laughter) I'm serious. I'm dead serious. That's just—.

But the funny thing is the week before we were to leave for—and this is like eight, nine days before the 100 butterfly preliminary—I got an impacted wisdom tooth. And so Don took me to the dentist and the guy said, "You know I can try to get you through this or we can take it out right here." So I said, "Take it out!" Okay, so he took the tooth out and they packed it, you know. And he wrote a little prescription for pain. And so we're walking out the front door and coach says, "Well, we can't worry about this." And he wads it and throws it over his shoulder—my pain prescription. (laughter) That night, about two o'clock in the morning, I called him and I said, "I don't care what you have to do—if you got to rob a pharmacy or whatever—but you better find something and get here!"

But anyway, I got through that. But you know, it was a little bit of a concern. And those are things today that you can't afford to do. You only can take what the Olympic Committees or major league baseball or any of these others have tested because over the counter stuff, you know—there's some stuff that you can get over the counter that is, you know, a vitamin or supplement of some kind that has creatine binders in it and stuff like that. You just cannot. You can't. They have lists of stuff, that if you want to take something, you know, like a vitamin? We got a kid on our swim team now, at Nitro, and we just sent them a letter—what's on the list so he can start taking a multi-vitamin. You know, that type of thing. Because they've got binders and stuff in there. You can't risk that, you know, nowadays. But anyway, yeah, I was—. Anything I thought would help, I would.

So we went and made the Olympic team. We went off to Olympic training. It was at Air Force Academy. We stayed at the Broadmoor. Well, we weren't at the Broadmoor. The Broadmoor over on one side was a ski chalet, I guess, for lack of words. It was a big—just a huge house with lots of different rooms and stuff like that and it was—.

People ask me, What was the toughest thing I ever went through? It was Olympic training camp. Because you have a group of guys out of twenty-eight, thirty guys. Everybody has their agenda. Okay? And everybody has friends who have an agenda. Okay? So, if you eat your breakfast and you're taking your tray up and you—glass falls off or something. Ever seen that happen? Sure. We all have. Half the room is going to be on you. Okay? If you have a bad workout, half the room is going to be on you. One day, they—. It was a Saturday afternoon and they decided they

wanted to play tag football. Not a good idea. Not a good idea. I didn't play, but they like—six, seven, eight on a side. I mean, it was brutal.

[TMH:] Um-hm.

[DR:] I mean, jump off your feet to go out for a pass, you're going to end up in a tree or something like that. It was—. But it was—. You know, there was a lot of male—well, let's say a lack of male bonding going on at this time because it was Pac 10–Big 10 type thing going on all the time. So it was tough. There was always some talk about the six gold medals and Mark. So it ended up that there were—to our way of thinking—there were three guys that stood in the way. There was myself in the 100 butterfly, there was Ken Walsh in the 100 freestyle, and a guy named Carl Robie in the 200 butterfly. Now Carl Robie was not somebody to sneeze about, 'cause he won a gold medal in the 200 butterfly in '64. So it's not like all of us are chopped liver type thing.

When I got there, they put me in the sprint group. Distance guys in the distance lane. Breaststrokers are a little bit different, so they put them in a lane, and middle distance, and sprinters. Mark was in the middle distance lane. I was in the sprinters'. So I went to coach Haines who was the head coach—Mark's coach—and I said, "I want to be in the middle distance lane."

"Oh, no, no, no, no, no. Kid, you can't. It'd be too hard for you. You're a sprinter; you need to be in the sprint lane."

I said, "No. I want to be in the middle distance lane."

So I did the workout. That night, I came back. I was in the middle distance lane. I went to him again, second time, and I said, “I want to be in the middle distance lane.”

“Oh, no.”

Next morning, came back, and I was there again. I was pissed now. I went back—this is a true story—packed my bags, everything I own. Went to his door, knocked on the door, and I said, “Can I get a ride to the airport?”

“What’s the matter?”

I said, “You’re not going to let me train where I feel like I need to train. I’m going home.”

“But it’s the Olympic Games.”

“I don’t give a—. I don’t care. Coach, all I need is a ride to the airport.”

Luckily, Don Gambriel—who was the assistant coach—kind of interceded and he said, “Well, put him in the middle distance lane and if he doesn’t survive, then you can slide him back to the distance lane.”

That made perfect sense, you know. “Fine, if I can’t handle it, I’ll move back. No problem.”

Okay?

Mark was a senior and Don was the coach at Long Beach State—Don Gambriel—later went to Alabama. He had a letter of intent from Mark to go to Long Beach State. But here Don was interceding for me. So, I took my stuff back and carried on.

Now, being one of the older guys, we had three big old Chrysler station wagons. So I had the keys to one of them 'cause of being one of the older guys. So I told the guys that rode with me, "I leave at seven o'clock in the morning. If you're not here, I'm not waiting for you and no one's going to go looking for you. Seven o'clock, I'm cranking, we're out of here. Okay?"

'Cause I wanted—again, I wanted to be at the pool, stretched and ready to go, basically, whenever Mark showed up. Now, if you read after '72, Mark—there was a book came out. Okay? And he—. He basically blamed his lack of success in '68 on the fact that nobody liked him because he was Jewish. He played the Jewish card.

[TMH:] Hm-hm.

[DR:] Big time. I never witnessed it, okay? But there's two things about that. One, if it would have helped me swim faster, I would have been Jewish, okay? Second thing is, I come from Midland, Texas. I could give a good damn about what your religion was or I didn't care and I didn't know and just—you know what I'm saying? It was so far from being an issue with me that it was just ridiculous. Okay. But Mark basically treated everybody kind of like—you know he treated me—from the respect standpoint. There were people in training camp—the guys from Indiana were trying to recruit Mark to make the switch from Long Beach State to Indiana. So anyway, there was a lot of that going on. But anyway, I was accused of stalking Mark. Okay? That may be true. Okay. Because when he got in the water, I got in the water. Most of the time we had to swim an 800m swim. You know, it was just like a warm-up swim. I was swimming the 800 fast, just so I would be there when he got to the wall. Okay? Was that a psychological thing against him? Probably not. It was more—'cause he wasn't paying attention—it was more of a

psychological thing for me. But, in training you swim in a circle pattern. You go down on the right, back on the right, and that's how you put three or four guys in a lane; you swim the circle pattern. If he went second, I went second. If he went third, I went third. If he went first, I'd go first. Because in my lane, was Ken Walsh, Carl Robie, and Doug. Okay? And every day we had to train better than him, okay, because he was not going to win six gold medals.

[TMH:] Um-hm.

[DR:] Okay? If he won six gold medals it would be over our backs. So, I mean, was it cheerleading, rah-rah type thing? No. Was it there? Yeah, it was absolutely there. But anyway—. So anyway, we got to the altitude. When they got there, what they did was—we stayed at the Broadmoor—but if you had a race that lasted longer than two minutes and five seconds—the scientists had told them that two minutes and five seconds that that's really where the altitude came in to play. They stayed in a cabins way above the tree line so they would come down and train. And they would then go back up. We stayed at the Broadmoor, which was at seventy-two hundred feet, and trained at the Air Force Academy. So there were two groups. The guys that had distance events. The altitude was—. The biggest thing about the altitude was like for swimmers was your long-term recovery, okay? An hour after practice, you would feel the same as you did an hour after practice if you were at sea level. But at two or three hours you wouldn't feel any better. There was always a lot of joint—shoulder, elbow, wrists, knees, ankles—discomfort type thing. I mean that's—. You could, you know, if you're sitting here and you ran outside and went and ran up and down the stairs, the next day your ankles would be sore. That's kind of how the altitude was. But other than that, you know, we basically trained and there's a

prep school on the campus at the Air Force Academy and we went there to have lunch, just a buffet—best food I ever had in my whole life, to this day. It was really good and we were really hungry. The only interaction Mark and I had was—. If you read his second book—. His second book, he—they hired a guy to do it and he did a pretty fair job. Somebody got exposed to mononucleosis or something like that. We had to get an anti-globulin shot early on in Olympic training camp. Well, evidently, Mark is deathly afraid of needles. Hmm. Okay? So we're all called into the living room and they're telling us that we're going to have to have an anti-globulin shot. So the doctor came. So they come out and say, "Alright, any volunteers?"

"I volunteer! I volunteer!" So I went in and got my anti-globulin shot and I came out. Now I'm a needle pushin' fool with my—you know, so I'm not—. Yeah, I'm not. Anyway, I come out of that room and I go, (moans) and I fall into Ken's arms, you know, like I pass out. Mark went nuts. I mean they literally had to carry him in there, you know, four guys, to get him to get his shots. That was just kind of funny. I was picking on him then for sure.

But anyway, the only other time was—we were in the shower. We got out of practice. I kept a logbook during Olympic training camp and in my logbook, every day, every practice, I tried to do something better than I'd ever done before. You guys don't know swimming and stuff like that but some nights it was really hard. I had to go to like the diving well. It's the fastest diving well breaststroke I ever swam. But I wrote every practice. I wrote something in there that was as good or better than I'd ever done. So I was late getting out of the pool that night. Mark and I are in the shower and I guess Mark was trying to be nice because he said, "Hey, Doug, what are you

going to do after the 100 butterfly, are you going to Acapulco? Are you going to go visit the ruins? What are you going to do?”

I just turned around to him and I said, “Well, I’m probably going to just try and spend as much time as I can resting in my room because I’ll have that medley relay.”

The medley relay is the last event on the program. The freestyle relays—400 and 800 free relays are early in the program. So they have to come up with either racing in training camp or once they get there, or use the time. Or use the Olympic trials times or whatever, okay? Being the last event, they used the fastest American swimmer in each event on the medley relay, okay? So the hundred butterfly is literally a two- gold medal race. Hundred back is literally a two- gold medal race. If you can win that. Okay? So, he, “Well, that’s what I’m going to be doing.”

Well, I just turn around or something and said, “Well, one of us is going to be really disappointed.”

I had the keys. I think I left him there but I’m not sure. (laughter) He’s used to being waited on. I didn’t wait on anybody. But anyway, being the last one out having car keys, I’m thinking, I left him there.

But anyway, the Mexico City—you know, I was basically there for a swim meet. They came to us one day—to my bad I was about half listening—there had been some violence in the City. This is my recollection. For the Olympic Games, they built—the Olympic Village was—a series of high-rise condominiums. You had a kitchen and a small living room and then there were three two-man rooms in a suite. And I think there were four suites on a floor. And these were like

seven, eight stories high. With poverty and stuff like that, students, I guess, pitched a fit about it and a bunch of them literally got gunned down. We were in Colorado Springs, you know.

You're not—. I'd never been to Mexico City, so, you know, probably more half listening than anything else. But anyway, so they warned us that there was some trouble, okay?

When we got to—. When we flew into Mexico City and got on the busses and we went to the Olympic Village. The Olympic Village had a fence around it and they had a big bus depot in the front. And the bus depot, it's kind of like Grand Central Station where you had a big walkway and the busses would come in and they'd have a sign and you went to wherever, got on whatever bus you wanted to get on. And there was a big, like, visitor area out in front, a busy street across the street and then on the other side was—for a lack of better term, growing up in Texas—it was like a caliche pit. It was like a dugout. It's something you might—you would say would be like a—where they dump trash, stuff like that. It was completely dug out and it was huge, really huge. Well, prior to our getting there, I guess the government passed out paint for people to spruce up their houses and stuff. And there was like five or six colors. Well, they were bright colors. If you can imagine in Mexico, like if you go to a Mexican restaurant there's like a yellow and an orange and a red and a— you know, all of those. But they weren't bright. They were real flat. They were not pretty colors at all. They were real flat. But anyway, across the street was this huge dugout and people were living there. Literally living in boxes, you know, it was—I bet there were ten, twelve, fifteen thousand people there. Seriously. And they had all these boxes but they were all painted these god-awful colors. So it was like the worst kind of poverty that you can imagine and then they slapped this—I don't know—to me it was like so condescending that I

couldn't—you know—I didn't look, okay? First of all, I know a little something about poverty and, you know, being on the low end, so, but anyway.

And then every night there would be—day and night there would be couple hundred girls on that side of the street—prostitutes. I mean, just a lot. Okay? So that was kind of the situation.

The opening ceremonies: there's the stadium and out back there's a big parade ground area and that's where you line up and then you march in as countries, okay? I was in a line with a bunch of track guy, field guy, the broad jumpers: Ralph Boston, Beamon—Bob Beamon—and then the only other white guy in the line was Jim Ryun, who was a miler out of University of Kansas, great miler out of Kansas. And you're there a couple hours before you march and you're there a long time. And it was warm and humid and you know—miserable. But it was kind of fun.

I grew up in Midland and I lived across the tracks. We had train tracks going through Midland. I lived on the other side of the tracks. Okay? Trust me. My wife tells me all the time she doesn't know why she married me because I lived on the other side of the tracks. But anyway, I got a letter from my mom. I was a freshman at Arlington and she'd sent me a article out of the paper: Midland Carver High School had won state football championship—whatever their division was. Okay? I literally lived in Midland, graduated from Midland High School, never knew that there was a black high school in town. And this is—Midland's only what? Forty, sixty thousand people? Never knew that there was a black high school in town and I lived on the other side of the tracks. I mean, I'm not particularly—I'm not saying I'm proud of that. I'm just saying I didn't know that, okay?

When I went to Arlington, my first roommate was a swimmer—Ernie Siefert—out of San Antonio. To tell you a little back-story, Hank Chapman—who was the head swimming coach at the University of Texas—had recruited a kid out of Houston, Texas named Luther Walker. And on the first day of school, Luther showed up at the athletic department. Hank had recruited this kid sight unseen. He showed up at the athletic department looking for Hank Chapman so he could register for school and he ran in to Darrell Royal. Luther's about 6'4", 190 pounds, cut—really, I mean a man's man. Black as he can be and Darrell Royal literally ran him off saying there were not going to be any black athletes at the University of Texas. Luther walked outside the athletic department, in a payphone right here on campus, and called Don because Don had also tried to recruit him and said that the University of Texas—. And Don says, "Well just get on the bus and keep on coming."

So anyway, Luther, after a couple of weeks—he roomed with a lineman, offensive lineman—and wasn't happy there. So anyway, eventually what—. I ended up Luther's roommate, okay? Now, Luther—. I had to live out of my footlocker because Luther—when he moved in—he had like sixty-seven different wool jackets. (laughter) And that many or more wool pants. He took up all the room in the closet, alright? A stack—two stacks—this high of laundered, folded shirts. Silk ties, okay? He always carried an umbrella with him, a—you know, with the—. He always went with an umbrella. He—everyday—he was impeccably dressed. You'd see him walking down campus, you'd swear to god he was the prince of something or whatever, okay? (laughter) I mean he—that's Luther—is a Methodist minister in Houston, Texas now and how he got in the Methodist Church I don't know, because he's more—I mean he can get fired up sometimes. He's funny. Luther is godfather to my oldest boy, okay? So anyway, so here I come from Midland,

Texas. I didn't even know they had a black high school and I got a black roommate, okay? But I, you know, I grew up—there were no black people but I didn't—but I never learned any prejudices, okay? Was that because I wasn't taught them or there weren't any black people? You know what I'm saying? I just—I never had those prejudices, whatever they were. Okay? When I roomed with Luther, okay, Luther and I would have conversations all the time about like what he sees in a black woman that's attractive as opposed to what I would see in a black woman that's attractive or unattractive. Same thing with a white woman, okay? Those kinds of conversations. One of the most important—that came back to me later on, was that we had this conversation several times: he would tell me that, “All you white people are concerned with are results when you go to a sporting event. You go to the basketball game, you go to the football game, and the only thing you care about is who wins because you're happy if your team wins and you're sad if your team loses.” He said, “Well, a black guy, he can go to a game”—and at the particular time it was O.J. Simpson. He said, “You can go to a game and you could see a great run by O.J. Simpson and you feel like you got your money's worth. You leave the game happy because you saw that play.” Okay? And we talked about that a lot but that was one of the conversations that I had.

So anyway, I'm in. We're getting ready to march in, and Ralph Boston was to my left and he—. I think that was his fourth Olympic team—I mean he is an old codger—the fourth Olympic team in the broad jump. And then Bob Beamon and then Jim Ryun. But anyway, when we're marching in it was a little eerie because the trail into the stadium zigzagged a little bit and they had tall grass and there were army guys lying down on their bellies behind machine guns in the tall grass. So it was—. It reverted. They didn't want any trouble and it reverted back to that

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time. So it was kind of, you know, it was kind of funny, too. And there were a bunch of them, all the way around. So that was pretty interesting.

Opening ceremonies are pretty cool. I can tell you that when you're out on the field—we're at the Pan American Games and Ken—we were marching in and Ken brought two newspapers with him—had them inside his jacket. Once we marched out, once we got out on to the field, he handed me one of them, okay? And, uh, I didn't know what that was. At that point in the ceremony, all the way around in Winnipeg, there were cages where they let the doves go, okay? They let the doves go and then at the other end, they have these cannons. So they're firing off the cannons. They let all the doves go and they fire the cannons. And the cannons scare the crap out of the birds who are circling the stadium trying to figure out. So the minute we walk in, he hands me and he pulls his paper out and he puts it over his head like that and I'm going, "Oh, I get it." So I put my paper on. (laughs) And I mean everybody. I mean that four-hundred athletes get crapped on—stuff like that. But anyway, I was worried about that walking in. I know that.

But anyway, Jim Ryun and I went to a dinner—a Sports Illustrated dinner. So I got to be friends with him and of course I walked in with Ralph and Bob Beamon. And I went to the stadium to see Jim's semi-final in this 1500 meters run. Then I walked around the stadium to where the broad jump pit was. I go up the canal there or whatever you want to call it and then get out into the stadium. I'm right in front of the broad jump pit and Bob Beamon is fixing to jump. In the broad jump pit, they have different placards. They got the Olympic record, and the American record, and the world record, and you know, that sort of thing. And Bob Beamon was fixing to jump, so I was glad I got there. And it was clouding up and it was real heavy. You know, you

just feel the humidity and it was real heavy. So I didn't sit down because it's fixing to rain and I'm going to get out of here. So anyway, on my watch Bob jumped. So anyway, he gets his mark and so he runs down and he doesn't hit his mark just right. He runs about half way and turns around and goes back, takes another attempt, comes down, takes off. The world record then was like 25'8", 25'7", 25'6". He jumps and at the world record he's still cresting and he damn near jumps out of the pit. He jumped like 29'2" ½ or something like that. It's on my wall at home in the office. I mean he just like obliterated the world. He just jumped like four feet further than the world record. And he hit and it was the funniest thing because I always remember it. It just sucked all the air out of all the people watching and all the—. Everybody just went—. You know, you're going, Did I? Did I just see what I think I just saw? And he hits and he bounces up and he turns around and he's the same way. He's like—. And then everything just kind of erupted and Ralph and all those guys came over and hoisted him up and it was pretty cool. That's one of the things.

The only other guy I know is, uh—what's the boxer's name? Has the griddle?

[Scott Jedlicka:] George Foreman.

[DR:] George Foreman is from Houston, okay? So I'm in Texas. On the airplane out to Mexico City I'm sitting by George Foreman so we kind of like get to know each other. And he's from Houston. So I trade. When you get there they give you like ten tickets to different sporting events if you want to go. And it's—I mean it might be like equestrian. It might be mostly things that you don't—. Okay, anyways, so I traded like six of mine for the finals of the boxing because George was telling me, "You want to be at the finals. There's going to be a Russian there. I'm

going to kick his—. You need to be there.” So I scored a ticket for George Foreman. If you see any pictures of the Olympic Games, one of them will be George Foreman with his little American flag and his glove. I’m sitting right behind this, okay? Anyway, in the Olympic Village, George Foreman and I are having breakfast—or he and I are there having breakfast. And the place is all abuzz and stuff like that and anyway it was the morning after John Carlos and Tommie Smith had done the Black Power thing, okay? So, again, the Jewish issue, the black issue—I mean I didn’t even know we had a black high school. All of my black awareness came from black people, okay? The situation with Luther and not—you know, not, uh—his attitude towards it was—I mean, he didn’t seem to be like dwelling on it like it was an issue. So anyway. So we finished breakfast and walk back and we walk around the building to the front and the front is like packed! I mean there’s like five-hundred people out there. Half of them got television cameras and the other half got microphones and they’re grabbing people and we go, “Oh, no!” So we turn around. So we go to the back. On the first floor of our high-rise are all the medical offices. So we’re throwing rocks at the window and somebody final opens the widow. We’re going to go in the back way; there’s no back door, just a front door. So he lifts me in to the window and I turn around to reach him. Now George Foreman’s like 6’5”, 260, and I’m 6’3”, 150. (laughter) So I had to climb out the window, give him a leap up, and then he reached down and pulled me in. That’s how we got in the dorms. (laughs)

But I lived in Las Vegas for a long time and I hadn’t seen George Foreman probably in twenty years and he went—or maybe it wasn’t that long—but he was doing a fight at Caesar’s Palace. In the back they had a gym where they trained and I walked in there to see him and he saw me at the door and remembered me. He stopped boxing and, “Doug!” You know? Hollering and came

over. And so it's pretty cool. Then he and I rode together on the way back to Dallas. So he's pretty—he's a really nice person—sweet person. I mean he's just—I can't believe he's a professional boxer because he doesn't appear to have a mean bone in his body. But anyway, he's a nice person.

But anyway, the John—. Tommie Smith seemed like a really nice person. So my attitude was if Tommie Smith had an issue, then it was probably a real issue, whatever it was. Okay? John Carlos I didn't like at all. John Carlos was a militant black man. Okay? So my little time that I was around him, I didn't like him because he didn't like me for, you know, just initial contact. So there was one guy there that I liked and there was one guy there that I didn't like. Okay. And that's about all—that's about all I know of it.

I took a—it's just been like three or four years—I took a cruise with a bunch of Olympians and I got a letter prior to going to Mexico City from some guy at Harvard. He was a boater—canoe guy—and was talking about these black issues. Okay. And I opened it and I read it and I didn't understand it and I put it back in the envelope and threw it back in my box. And I dug it out prior to that cruise and I took it because there were a couple of guys there that were involved in the Olympic Movement, were at the training centers and stuff like that, and I gave it to one of them and he thought it was like gold because it was a thread, in those days, going around about the discussions prior to—if there would be that Black Power—so there was talk about that, doing it. Although everything I heard was that it was spontaneous, okay? And what I heard about it was: it was spontaneous from John Carlos' standpoint and Tommie Smith, being the gold medalist, went along with it. That's about—and that's all hearsay type thing.

The 100 butterfly—what they do is they—you swim a preliminary—they cut the sixteen. You swim a semifinal; and they swim the final. In both the prelims and the semifinals, I was in the heat before Mark, in the same lane. And, uh, I was pretty confident ‘cause I had a hell-of-a training camp. I was swimming better than I—I mean way better than I ever had in training up to that point. Part of that was I had—you know—you had great swimmers around you. You had to swim great to just to keep up. Okay. But I killed that middle distance lane. We would finish practices with, you know, like, sprint 50s and stuff like that. I’d swim my—. The butterflyers would all go, so it was a little bit of a head-to-head and I’d, you know, I’d beat Mark by three-quarters of a body length and George Haines would go, “Doug, 26, flat. Mark, 26:1.” And I used to—. I got a big kick out of that. That was a confidence builder for me. His coach had to lie for him, to keep him, you know, in the ballpark.

Well, Mark’s first book—first of all, he won a gold medal in the 400 free relay. His first individual event was the 100 freestyle. And in the 100 freestyle, Ken—my roommate—he only breathed on the left side, okay? And he qualified eighth in the eighth lane, okay? So that meant—when he flipped at the other end—coming back, he would be breathing against the wall so he couldn’t see what was happening on the inside of the swimming pool.

I couldn’t go to the pool for his 100 freestyle because I had to swim the next morning—so they wouldn’t let you go out running around. So they had the big athlete center, okay? And down there’s a long hall there and they had T.V.s every so often. So I got a big chair and I pulled it down in the middle, in front of this TV. I was the only one there because they were showing the events and I’m waiting for Ken’s 100 freestyle. Pretty soon I am surrounded by Australians and

Russians, okay? And I'm a little concerned because the Russians are water polo players. Water polo players are animals. They are all huge and they're all as thick as they are big. I mean, they're just animals. Anyway, so there I was sitting there by myself. Pretty soon there's like a hundred people there, okay? So here comes the 100 freestyle, all right? And anyway, Ken flips the turn. I'm literally standing up with my nose on the TV hollering at Ken, okay, specially the second 50 because I know he cannot see what's going on. Okay?

Anyway, an Australian wins it; Mike Wenden wins the 100. Ken gets second. Mark is third. Okay? Oops! Okay? Now we're down to five gold medals. Okay? Plus, there's no way Mark can get on the medley relay in the freestyle spot. Okay? So he's five. They literally have a press conference that night. George Haines, and some of the people from the OSC, you know, "We're still on tap for five gold medals," and you know, "that's better than four." You know, "We'll set a record," and all that stuff. And, anyway, so I'm more than pissed off.

So anyway, the next day, we swim the preliminaries. I intellectually know that I got to change the way I swim to change the outcome, okay? The good lord gave me the ability to swim fast, okay? What I hadn't learned was that I could swim as fast as other people without having to swim as hard as other people, okay? When they shot that gun, I'm gone. I mean that's just what I was born with, okay? But anyway, in the preliminary, okay, this was my logic: I'm going to swim my old race, in my old race, and see how it feels at altitude, okay? So I got out really fast. I got to 95 meters and I tied up, you know? I like, barely get to the wall. I swam pretty fast but barely get to wall. Okay. Mark is—I mean Mark is like bending over in my face, "Watch that altitude!"

I'm going—you know, I'm a little bit of a good actor. It was awful. I'm like I'm trying to get arms unfolded, you know? You know, I'm going, "Oh it hurts!" carrying on, you know? So anyway, so I "Can you help me out of the pool?" You know, "Never mind. I'll get it." You know? Anyway I swam over to the side and got out.

Then that night is the semi final, so I don't know if I'm holding on to the old way of racing or I guess what I'm really trying to do: can I swim my way and win? Okay, so I do the same thing, same result. Okay. And out of the semis I qualified first. Mark qualified second. And so the next night is the 100 butterfly and they put you in your own ready room about an hour before your event. And the ready room is like a huge—it's a little bit bigger than this room but it's all that slotted wood. Looks like a sauna, exactly like a sauna bath with the benches in the middle with the little slot—exactly like a sauna bath, no windows. So eight competitors and a little Mexican guy at the door, okay, and with a little window opens up. And you're set in there for like an hour, okay, and that's when I thought about—I was thinking about my personal success, you know, up to that point. That's when I was thinking about not being chosen last. Eventually I was the quarterback, okay. If there's an odd number you play offense both ways. If not, the quarterback looks at you every time and tells you to go long, okay. I mean you just run as far as you can and then the play's over and you run back. Next time you go long, okay? You're so bad, or at least the perception, that nobody really defends you, okay? You're just going out there, going long. So every day during the games you'll get one pass; they'll throw one pass long to you. So you have one opportunity to pass or fail, okay? They're gonna throw one ball to you. When it's coming, you're thinking, "If I don't catch those I ain't getting another one for a month."

Okay, alright. Anyway, so I'm sitting there and I'm thinking and I'm kind of laughing to myself because I was the guy that invented—I don't know if you guys watch football or anything like that—I am the guy that invented the dump off pass, okay? Because when I got to be quarterback we had that little kid that got picked last so this is what I was telling him. I'd say, "You go up to the line of scrimmage, all right? When we hike the ball, what I want you to do, I just want you to take three or four steps back and I'm just going to throw you a little pass instead of throwing long where there's all kinds of opportunity to make mistakes. I'm just gonna dump this off." And I said, "You run like hell because those guys over there are going to be pissed and when they get to you they are going to knock you down and they're probably gonna step on you, okay? So you better run like hell!"

So I'm sitting there thinking about that. I thought that was pretty funny.

And the other thing I was thinking about was Luther Walker and all our conversations. So when you get to Mexico City and you get to an Olympic Game there is one thing you're impressed with right from the get go, okay, and that's in an Olympic Game they only give one medal—the gold medal. It's not fair, you know. You should be able to go and enjoy the experience and all that crap but, no. That's not the way it is, okay, especially if you're in an event that you feel like you can compete or you've been at world-class level. I trained really hard, really well, you know. So I was thinking about what Luther had said. I walked out that door and I said to myself, I'm not going to worry about winning; I'm going to swim the best race I can and if he beats me, he is going to have to swim the best anybody's ever swam. So that was my mindset.

So there's a little knock on the door and a little Mexican lady—she says, “Time for the athletes.” And we go to a little stateroom— a real nice little room but it's about this size and there's little couches and you can put your bags and stuff or whatever in there. You can take your warm-up off if you want or just go out. You can take it out there with you or you can, you know, if you wanted— just whatever. You go out the door and right in front of you are the blocks, okay. We go left. I'm the fastest qualifier; I'm in the front of the line and I'm going [whistles], “Block's over here. We're going that way.”

They're marching around the swimming pool, okay. That night was also the men's 200 breaststroke and a kid named Felipe Munoz qualified first and had a shot at a gold medal. Felipe would win that gold medal and he came to the University of Texas; he swam at the University of Texas. Anyway, the place was wall-to-wall Mexicans and they are fired up. I mean they are cucarachas and whatever. I mean it's loud. Okay, so we got to march around the pool so we go down and around and we get back to the far corner of the pool and start our way back and they realize it's not the 200 breaststroke, okay. So then, by the time—so we're, I'm—we're kind of laughing. By the time we get back there, they're turning hostile. You know, they'd just as soon us get our fannies out of there and let's get the 200 breaststroke; that's what we came for. So they're starting to get hostile, okay? Now turn and come back and I'm in my little—I take my T-shirt off and I'm going over to the pool and this is a true story. And I start to bend down just to get a little water from my mouth, you know, just to feel the water and the water is like glass and I'm kinda taken back because that's exactly like the water was when I was a kid. ‘Cause I'd run and jump in the water and chase the ripples to the other end. Okay, so was it was like, “Oh, I get it now!” You know? So where the ripples—when I was little—was, I thought they were competition.

They weren't. They were pointing the right direction. So I thought that was pretty neat. So anyway, I didn't disturb the water.

So anyway, they call us up there. I mean I'm having serious talks with myself about learning. You know, just control the first 50. You know, just have enough huevos to just, you know, control the first 50. They shoot that gun. Boy, I get in the water, you know, on the dive and when I take my first stroke I'm still down a little bit so I felt that against my shoulders like, you know, I wasn't up on top of the water all the way where it needed to be. I just—a little bit and it kind of like [snaps fingers] got my attention a little bit. So, uh, we swim down to the 50 and I'm about two thirds of a body length behind and so we make the turn and we 're coming back and I'm thinking Mark, well, Mark's gonna be impressed that he's out really fast because he's never been ahead of me at the 50. So I think he'll like try to relax a couple of strokes here in the middle, you know, that type of thing. Anyway there was an American—Ross Wells—was in there. Anyway, in the middle of the pool we literally take five strokes. We look like synchronized—topless synchronized swimmers, you know. I mean literally, all three of us take like five strokes. In the middle of the pool, I knew I'd won. I just knew I'd won, okay. And you know, your self-talk goes like seven times your normal speaking rate. So my mind's going, so I'm going, I'll hit the turn. I'll get to the end and I'll turn, all right? And stop like, Oh this is the 200; I thought that it was the hundred. I'm being a smartass, okay? Or I'm gonna touch that wall and jump out really fast like What took you guys so long? I've been here, you know, like forever. You know, I'm really, you know.

But anyway, so because I was still accelerating when I hit the water and I beat him five tenths of a second, okay. But that's not exactly the way it played out. But anyway, I got out and got down on my knees because during the summer—uh, I was telling you about— you feel a tremendous amount of pressure because you—. I mean you want to do this thing but the other thing is you feel like if you don't, if you don't accomplish, you're gonna let everybody down, okay.

I was engaged to my first wife; at that point I broke up with her. I don't want to have anything to do with her, okay. I didn't. I couldn't handle her expectations. My mother would call me and I would never answer the phone. They allowed me to live in the athletic dorm; there was nobody there during the summer, so I lived in the athletic dorm by myself, okay. Now the athletic dorm at UTA at one time it was a stables, seriously. And they made rooms out of it. So there was one common bathroom and then there were two rooms on each side of it. So I stayed in one of those rooms by myself all summer long. So all night long there's little, you know, noises and stuff like that. So, uh, and then I did things like I'm training at Arlington, Mark's training in Santa Clara so I knew he was through with his practice around nine o'clock at night which is 11 o'clock in Arlington, okay? So every night I would set my alarm for one o'clock in the morning and I would get up at one o'clock in the morning. I had an Exer-Genie. An Exer-Genie was a little pulley thing and it had a little tube at the top and you could adjust the resistance on it, all right? It had a loop on the end and you put it in the door so you get a workout. So I'd get up at one o'clock and do 500. Some nights I couldn't go back to sleep, so I'd do like a 1000 Exer-Genies, pulling on it. Because I knew that when I got up in the morning and went to work out, Mark was still in bed. When Mark went to bed at night, I was still up at night working out. It was just kind of a mental thing type thing. But anyway I didn't have anything to do with my friends— anything. I was, I

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mean, I was, uh—after workouts, I'd—you know, they'd say, "Let's go eat." I'd duck out. You know, I'd say, "Sure that's a great idea." And then I'd duck out on them and stuff like that. So, I mean, you get—you can get really warped up until, you know, up until that point.

But the hundred butterfly lost Mark a gold medal and he lost his last chance for the medley relay. So now he's like that—oops! He's down to three, okay. He got two on the two freestyle relays but, uh, 'cause he was done by the time of the 200 butterfly. But anyway, so, uh, that was—.

Then the last night was the 400 medley relay and I know it has—.

The Cold War, asked something about the Cold War? What was that? I didn't know. Cold War? But I did know that actually in '68 in swimming was the first time that the East Germans were starting to make a run at world-class swimming. They had a backstroker—Roland Matthes— won the hundred and the two-hundred and they had a medley relay and they were kind of popping off that they were gonna win the medley relay. And they had a good medley relay with Roland Matthes on the front of it. And so anyway, backstroke starts the medley— back, breast, fly, free. So I swim the third leg and Ken swims the anchor and we're standing there because the backstroker and the breaststroker or are both from Indiana. Tom Hickcox just passed away here about six weeks ago. But anyway, Roland Matthes just beats the crap out of Tom. I mean we're like—. I'm like—. Then the breaststroker and I am standing there and Ken's standing next to me and I'm going, "Ken, you think we were going to be this far behind? Ken?" And I look over where he'd been standing by me. He'd left. He went over and stood on the other side of the blocks, left me standing there. And anyway. So anyway, I caught the relay up and we ended up winning but it was kinda funny. So we held off that charge.

[TMH:] Um-hm.

[DR:] So, what else can I answer? That's a lot of stories.

[TMH:] I guess, you know, Tom brought this idea of preserving the legacy of the '68 team. What after—and I understand how you felt while you were there. It was swim race; it was a competition. You cared about one thing. In hindsight, after all these years, what do the games mean to you now?

[DR:] Well, I mean, I—if I talk about Mexico City, the first one—it was that caliche pit across. That was my first time visually seeing, you know, that kind of poverty.

[TMH:] Um-hm.

[DR:] Okay? Um, another story was: coach Easterling got to Mexico City and I took a cab down to downtown to have dinner with him. Then I took a cab back, okay? And I had my Olympic top on and the cab driver was a really nice guy and he kind of, he said, “Do you mind if I stop at my house and introduce you to my daughter?”

[TMH:] Hmm.

[DR:] Or someone, okay? And I said, “No, I don't. I don't.” He said, “It's on the way.” And I said, “No, I don't mind.” So we stopped. It was an apartment building with the courtyard in the middle, okay? Two story. And so we stop and he wants me to get out. So I get out and we go in, all right? Everybody in that apartment building was related and I met them all! (group laughs) And there were like there must have been forty kids there. There was a ton of kids there. And they all knew—it got to be a hoot because they all knew—a little bit of English. Different

English, you know, like, you know, “What is your name? Where do you live?” You know, “Do you have brothers?” And, you know, stuff like that. So I had to listen to forty different questions in English, you know, just out-of-the-blue type-thing. So anyway, it was funny.

So I met everybody, okay? And so then he said, “Do you mind if some of the kids come with us to take you back to the—.” And I said, “No, I don’t.” So we get in this cab and it was a yellow cab. It was one of the old—you know what a yellow cab is? It’s one of the—it was made just for taxis. It’s huge. It was like—. Anyway, so me and him get in the cab. There’s twenty kids in there. You know, they’re—the poor kids on the bottom—I don’t know. They were all—.

So anyway, we got back to the Olympic village and I have him pull in to the depot area ‘cause I’m with him and I had my badge so the po-po lets him in. I said, “You guys just stay right here.” So then I went up and—Olympic pins—they give you a bunch of Olympic pins because pin trading and stuff like that. But it’s gotten to be a much bigger deal now than it was then. But I had a big bag full of U.S. swimming pins, so I ran up and got my pins and went back down and gave all the kids—you know. So from that standpoint how important Olympic Games in that area are, how the kids kinda take it and all. So that was pretty cool. I enjoyed that.

When I got back to the airport in Dallas, you know, there was probably a hundred kids there from my swim team and from the college. Well, the next morning after I won my gold medal, I went to breakfast and I came back and there were two stacks of telegrams this tall in front of my door. I mean I read every one of them. People from, I mean, school buddies, fraternities, school, high school, you know, relatives. I mean everybody had sent a telegram. That was pretty cool.

So they were waiting for me at the airport and they hoisted me up on their shoulders I got a—you know—they gave me a ride to the baggage claim. And that was pretty cool. And they had Doug Russell Day in Arlington and I went back to Midland and they had a ticker tape parade for me in Arlington. I sat in the back of a convertible and Midland. I don't know if you've ever been to Midland but Midland is a—they got a lot of—even in my day they had high—you know—a bunch of buildings there, which was, you know, not the norm in West Texas. But anyway they were throwing shredded paper out the window but some of it—I don't know if it was wet or whatever, but some of it—came down like snowballs type-thing. So that was you know, from a Texas standpoint, everybody enjoyed it and stuff, so I was happy from that.

About two weeks later, everything started calming down a whole lot. I know I went to sleep on a Sunday evening and I slept till Thursday morning. You know, I slept for like four days straight.

[TMH:] You know, I can't think of anything else. I mean this is fantastic, though, just absolutely fantastic. We were really concerned because the last interview we did we did over the phone and it was like pulling teeth. It was like pulling that tooth that you had at the dentist and, anyway, so we decided we were going to send the questions ahead of time rather than—we did it just dry last time.

[DR:] Drug testing was a—what an annoyance. Now I grew up in West Texas, okay? So when you swim, when the race is over you go to this real nice living room area and stuff like so you can put your warm-up on. They'd brought your stuff over and you could put your warm-up on, comb your hair and make a call. So I got to call my mom. That was pretty cool. Then you do the tour around and then they give the gold medals and stuff like. Well you're coming off of the

gold medal stand and two little—one on each side—little Mexican guys grab you and you go to the pressroom. It's a big auditorium like thing with a little small stage and you're sitting at a table up there. It's just like you see on TV now. But there's like two or three languages that are the official languages.

[TMH:] Um-hm.

[DR:] So they ask a question and it has to be translated, translated and then you give them an answer and then it has to be translated and translated. It takes forever. You sit there and it goes around and around and comes back. It's like the wave, you know, type-thing.

So anyway, and Mark was on the 800 free relay that night so he didn't march around with us in the ceremony, in the march around athlete parade before, and he walked out to do the record ceremony and then he took off after that. So anyway. So then, press conference is over. Two little Mexican guys grab you and you go back in the back of the swim center to medical offices, okay? And they got a table sitting out there and it's got waters and Coca-Colas and oranges and bananas and it has all this stuff and you're not sure about the water, okay? In the rooms they had bottled water. And there's soda water and then I think there's like sparkling water type stuff.

Somebody, one of the girls, Katie Ball—who was a world record holder in hundred breaststroke—she kept drinking one of them and got so constipated they had to send her home. She couldn't even swim her event. So you're a little worried about drinking the water.

But anyway, I'm—

[TMH:] You're not drinking a lot of water.

[DH:] Well, no. I'm sitting there. I got a—you have to pee in this bottle, okay. But you go in to a little closet like area, okay. And there's not a—there's a sink with no spickets on it, okay. Um, and that's it. And the little Mexican guy has to walk in there and watch you pee in the bottle . Now from I'm West Texas; I'm not real used to having a male watch me, you know, pee in a bottle. So I mean, you know, it's—. I go in there like two times and it's, you know. So I come out. So I'm finally—. Finally, I get frustrated and I'm just (knocks on table).

[Group:] Hmm.

[DH:] You know, anything and everything. And finally you pee in this flask and they put a stopper on it and you—. He puts a—melts a—candle on it and then he's got a little stamp thing. So that's how they— you know. Then you're free to go. I'll tell you two stories and then I'll get out of your hair.

So, anyway, I get out of there and it's like after 12 o'clock and I get out on the depot and there's like, there's nobody there. And I wait and I wait and I wait for a bus. You guys, have you recently—the book that came out about the Chinese Tiger Moms—have any of you guys heard?

[TMH:] Oh yeah.

[DH:] Huh? Heard about that? Okay. Well, Mark had a Tiger Dad—Arnold. He was his publicist, you know, and he went, well, he went around telling everybody that Mark was gonna kick their fanny, you know, and he's the greatest swimmer of all time and all that stuff. Anyway, this is a true story. Finally a bus comes along. I get on the bus. I have my medal I'm in my

warm-up suit and got my medal on. I get on the bus and I sit down and take a breath and look in the back of the bus: Arnold and Mrs. Spitz. That was a quiet ride.

[TMH:] Yeah, I bet it was!

[DR:] That door opened and I was gone. That was funny. But the next morning at breakfast, um, several of the guys came up to me and said Mark was spouting off that he hoped something showed up in my drug test.

[TMH:] Uh-hm.

[DR:] And they'd take my medal away. (breath) I was mad. Marched back to the condo or dorm, whatever the hell it was. Went up to my room, got the medal, went down to his room. Door was open; he was in there. I walked in and I set it on the bed and I said, "Mark, if that thing means that much to you, here; you can have it."

I turned around and walked out. I got about 10 steps and I said, Doug, that's the stupidest thing you've ever done in your life! So then I turned back around and I went back down there and I stuck my head in and I said, "Mark, I'm going to go back and finish my breakfast and when I come back if that medal is not in my room on my bed, I'm coming down here and I'm throwing you out that window—and this is like 7 stories—and you're going out that window."

So I went back to breakfast and when I came back it was on my bed. I don't know how he got in there.

[TMH:] The door was locked and everything?!

[DR:] The door was locked and he got it in there somehow, but—. So that was also the day—. Shaving down is not a, uh—. I had my Speedo on and I'm in the bathtub and I got my shaving cream and stuff like. And you shave all the hair off your body because when you get in the water, you really—. It's a great feel. But anyway, I'm in there and I'm shaving my legs and I hear a little (squeaks like wiping a window) and I look around and this one little Mexican lady's in there, up there, cleaning the floors, okay? And I—and she looks at me and she's laughing as she scurries off, you know, and I can't—. I'm just doing what I'm doing. There's about 10 minutes later, there's like (giggling). I hear (giggling). I turn around, there's like 15 ladies all looking in there because I'm shaving my—. I don't know what they were thinking was going on but it was kinda funny.

The Russians had a team there. I mean, I had no contact with them. The East Germans, they're all—I don't know what kind of pressure they're on or under, you know? We didn't—.

Swimming—the last time the United States really dominated swimming, I mean we won most of the medals and so that was the last time because by '72 the East German women were a force.

So, uh, training at altitude, other than those days I went up to above sea level, I mean above the tree line—which it must have been about 12,000, 10,000 feet—whatever tree line is.

The meaningful experiences—. Oh, we trained in Long Beach for four or five days and then we went to Denver. We got off the plane at Denver and we went to the Broadmoor and they told us just to leave our bags out front, okay? And they gave us these tags. We literally sent all our bags home and they took us to a warehouse in Denver and this warehouse—you walked in and it had

tables sitting end to end and they snaked all around this big huge warehouse so you—. The first thing they gave you was a huge suitcase and you opened it up, okay, and you just moved it along this table and you got underwear and socks and swimsuits and warm-ups and T-shirts and you just kept going and then we got to one area where they fitted you for your parade uniform and stuff like that. So you sent all your stuff home and then you came back with suitcases and swim bags and you know, stuff like that. So that was you know, that's pretty cool. So you, I mean you go through. They make you feel pretty special. You know, you're pretty much taken care of and you're thinking your stuff doesn't stink and you know. But you get to that point where you got to compete and that's the thing that makes the Olympics—then and today—makes it different than anything that you run in to. Because the Olympics are every four years it's too hard. It's very difficult to get there and Mr. Carter—Mr. Jimmy Carter—he made it way more difficult, especially in swimming. When you go in that ready room it's you and all your demons; so you got external and internal competition.

[TMH:] Yeah.

[DR:] You know? And so that's what makes it different.

[TMH:] Um-hm.

[DR:] 'Cause you feel like if you don't win, that you're destined for poverty before all time or whatever—I don't know what. But that's what makes it a lot different than anything else you run into.

[TMH:] If you had one piece of advice to give an Olympian today what would it be?

[DR:] Well, I think the first one is, you know, just try to enjoy the experience. Now I kept a log and the log started out being how I was training and I was intent on putting something in there positive every day and it morphed into trying to keep negative thoughts out, okay? So if I got a negative thought I would write it down and then tried to intellectually say that that's not, you know, that that's just a figure. So a lot of things, like when I got back to the room that night after winning, I spent a lot of time in my journal because I was thinking about Luther and I was thinking about my little, you know, not getting picked last. I mean there's a lot of things that jump into your head. So I would think, just try to record or at least try to remember and get it down somehow so that you don't forget a lot of the things that you went through. So I think that's—.

You know, you're talking about the Cold War and the Black Power Salute and you know all of that stuff. I don't know if it's just growing up in Texas—now I was in college then I was a history major but current events and things like—shoot—by and large I was oblivious to 'em because I didn't—they weren't—. I guess they were important but they weren't important to me. So I didn't—. You know, when I got there, I had competition; it didn't make any difference to me if it was a Russian or Australian or an American. You know, it was just competition, so—. And then I went through that Olympic training camp. I mean, I know that now they spend a lot of time doing teambuilding.

[TMH:] Um-hm.

[DR:] Okay? And the importance of, you know, being part of the team. Part of their thinking is that the team will help you reach a higher standard and I'm not really in that school because I

think there's enough—I know there's enough—pressure on you when you get there. You take that with you. But there was no teambuilding.

[TMH:] Sounds like the opposite.

[DR:] Yeah. It was, you know, it was literally every man for himself. And, you know, it was tough. Don Gambriel was good to me. You know, he helped me through all my training and cost him Mark Spitz.

[TMH:] Hmm.

[DR:] 'Cause Mark ended up going to Indiana, opting out of his—. You know, and I felt responsible for that. But he ended up leaving Long Beach State and going to University of Alabama, so he ended up all right.

But when you, uh—. The award ceremony, when they raised the flag, you would, uh—. You would think the feeling is, you know, fist pumping, jubilation, you know, jumping up and down, you know— that type of thing. It's not that way at all; it's kind of like peace of mind, you know, type thing that you've never experienced before. When you're coming up swimming, you get to one level and there's another level. You do this one thing and then there's, you know—. I set world records. I set American records. I made High School All-American and I made NCAA All-American between college division and university division 87 times.

[TMH:] Hmm.

[DR:] I won a NCAA National Championship, set an NCAA record. You know, won a AAU championship and you know, all of those type things but there was always, you know, like always something—.

[TMH:] Higher?

[DR:] Something else. And you get to that point and you say, “Ah, this is it.” You know, I've done it. Trust me (laughs); it's never ending. It's never ending and I'll tell you why: because I red-shirted that year. So I had another year of college; so I came back for my senior year of college. And you realize that once you've been to the Olympic Games, that little local meet or whatever, is not, like, quite the same. So you're not like—. But everywhere I went, uh, you'd run into some 15, 16-year-old kid who had shaved his head and was standing there (hysterical breath sound) looking at you like, you know, you're the big bad guy. I mean, it really got to be hysterical— funny a lot of times.

So I ran into that and then the other thing, too, is that you swim in a meet and you know, you don't—you're obviously way off your best time—you know, type thing. And, you know, you have people going, “Argh!” They're disappointed, you know, he's not—you know.

[TMH:] Um-hm.

[DR:] You know, you get that kind of thing. Then, you'd be going out the door and say hi to somebody and not say hi to somebody and then that person's all—.

[TMH:] Oh, they're pissed at you?

[DR:] Yeah, you know, like you're stuck up and stuff like that. So yeah, I mean it's—. It's tough.

[TMH:] That's quite something. Um, Doug, I gotta apologize, but I've got a faculty meeting that I've got to run to. But Scott, can you get to—? You're still involved coaching swimming?

[DR:] Uh-hm.

[TMH:] And I think it'd be important to get that part, too. Do you mind carrying it from here?

[Scott Jedlicka:] Uh, hold on. I gotta check one thing.

[TMH:] Okay. Or Brennan.

[Pause in recording]

[SJ:] Brennan's coming back but we can keep going for a while.

[DR:] Okay.

[SJ:] Yeah, like Tommy said, um, you know. You came back and—. Maybe just talk a little bit about what happened, you know, after you stopped swimming. I mean, did you stay in the sport or no?

[DR:] At the end of my senior year, my coach took a job at North Carolina State as the men's and women's coach, which was a big step up for him. And I was coming back from campus and I got a case of the dumbass really bad. I went into the athletic office and applied for the job.

[SJ:] For? Oh, for his job.

[DR:] For his job. Okay? And they're any smarter than I am. They gave it to me, okay, because you're the Olympic champion, okay? Uh, you know, from a swimming standpoint we were

successful. I was there five years. We were like 87 and 12, you know? I mean, we performed pretty well. But it was—you know, to get out of the water and then be in charge of guys that you were in the water with is—. I mean—.

[SJ:] So you were like 23 years old.

[DR:] Yeah.

[SJ:] Head coach of a—.

[DR:] Yeah. A university team. Uh, you know, so doing grade checks and bed checks and the worst thing is recruiting. And I felt like after five years that, you know, you get to where it's the old, "How long is the piece of string?" Well, how long do you need it to be, you know, type thing. When you're recruiting that's what happens. I mean, you talk to a kid and you get really good at telling him what he wants to hear and not necessarily telling him what he needs to hear. So, I mean UT is a great, great university, you know, but it's just a—.

I went to the pool at five o'clock in the morning. I had married my college sweetheart, okay? I went to the pool of five o'clock in the morning. I was not on the staff—. I was on the staff, not on the faculty, okay? Because I didn't have a teaching credential, okay. So I took care of both pools—indoor and the outdoor pool, ran intramurals in swimming, okay? Coached the men's team, started the women's team, started three high school teams in town and then most of my income came from the use of the pool in the evenings for my club team. So I got home at 10 o'clock at night. I left at five in the morning; came home at 10 o'clock at night. And so, married and had two kids; my wife dropped dead of a heart attack and you know it just—. I never

really—. I never felt like I really got a handle on it, you know? Just wasn't—I don't know. Can't say—. Was I mature enough? I don't know if that's experienced enough. Definitely no, you know. It's, you know, it's a lot of responsibility to be juggling and a lot of balls in the air and stuff like that. So, I ended up—. I went to Amarillo—coached a club team; had a good time. And then at that point I wanted to—. I wanted to either get in coaching or get out of coaching. So I took a job in California. So I went to California and I took over a swim program that had put a kid on the Olympic team for like the last four Olympics in Lakewood Aquatics, just inland from Long Beach. I got there about the time they had Proposition 13 where voters revolted on property taxes and stuff like that and they voted property taxes way, way down.

[SJ:] Um-hm.

[DR:] And so the city started closing pools, not taking care of pools; we lost our facility and just all kinds of things.

[SJ:] So about what year is this?

[DR:] This was '79 and I went down to San Diego, took over a club there; was very successful there at least in my estimation, but I had one of the top three club teams in the country and you know, I was making like twenty-thousand dollars a year— no benefits— and my oldest boy got a brain tumor. So, I got out of coaching; we moved to Orange County for a couple of reasons and then I got into sales—got out of coaching. Now, just recently in the last—. I moved back to Austin four years ago and I'm an assistant coach with the Nitro swim program out in Cedar Park— having a great time.

[SJ:] And what ages is that?

[DR:] It's an age group program, so it's—

[SJ:] Oh, okay—all ages.

[DR:] So it's young kids all the way up to seniors in high school.

[Brennan Berg:] Is that your first experience coming back into coaching since you left?

[DR:] Um-hm. Yeah. Well, my youngest boy—I tried to get him involved in swimming. And he didn't want to have anything to do with it. He loved baseball, so I spent most of his—from the time he was nine to when he graduated from high school, we had a club team—travel team. We were involved in baseball. He was a fourth-round pick of the Atlanta Braves out of high school and kids that he grew up with, they stayed together all the way through high school. Four of them got drafted; five of them got D1 scholarships, so there was a really good group of kids. They're still, you know, still friends today and they're grown-up, so—

[BB:] Sounds like a pretty good team.

[DR:] Yeah, they were. They were the Yard Dogs.

[BB:] There you go.

[DR:] Yeah, it was fun. So I'm at Cedar Park. I work with the national group. I'm assistant coach with the national group. I'm kind of like that head coach, you know, at my advanced age, you know, I'm kind of the grandpa and I get away with telling the kids the way it is and they get their dose of old school which I think is, you know, is a little bit important. And so—

[SJ:] Is the— sort of—Olympic system, I mean the progression, pretty similar to when you were racing to how it is today? I mean—.

[DR:] Oh no. It's—. When I swam in '68 I was an *amateur*, okay? I mean it was very—you know.

[SJ:] And all the things that went with that.

[DR:] Yeah. The biggest thing—. Well, some of the things that have changed is now, a guy can have a trust fund, okay. So he can accept prize money or reward money. Like the Olympics— USA swimming gives a monetary prize for medals, you know, things like that. They can go into the trust fund so, you know, those guys can live a pretty good life and train, where I needed to have a job. That's why I quit after I got out of college, you know? I had a wife and family; I had to work. I couldn't—. Where now you can accept prize money or endorsement money and stuff like that and live off the trust fund.

Jimmy Carter boycotted the Olympics in 1980, okay? And it didn't do any good. It just brought politics into the Olympic Games and they turn around in '84 and they didn't go to Los Angeles so that's how stupid it is, okay? But one of the things people aren't aware is that the United States was also—was punished on the Olympic movement level, okay, because in '68, the top three made the Olympic team out of the Olympic trials. Well one—after 1980, what they did was they lowered that to two, okay. So to make the Olympic team, you got to be in the top two. That's huge! I mean, because you can—. I mean you could have a guy—obviously not Mike Phelps, but one of those guys could—end up third, you know, by a thousandths of the second

and still, you know. So I mean that was huge. That put a lot more pressure—I mean, there's a lot of pressure on the Olympic trials as it is but that put even more.

[SJ:] Is it still that way today, then?

[DR:] Yep. So that's—the rules of the sports have changed: backstrokers don't have to touch the wall; breaststrokers can put their head under the water, you know, things like that. But there's—obviously there's more research nowadays. People understand swimming a lot better. Weight training—when I was swimming we—at the beginning of the season we do six weeks of, you know, barbells, you know, basically training and running and stuff like that and then we didn't do it again, okay? And we know now that, you know, if you stop doing something 14 days afterwards you're going to start losing that, you know, what you gained, so. I mean, and then Nautilus and then Universal, you know, all of the equipment now. Nutrition, being another big thing which is really important and also another big thing now—. In baseball there was the steroids scandals. Okay, we all know about that. So they start steroid testing; they take that out of the way as much as they can, okay. So what do the guys do? Okay, what they do is they found core training, you know, and it's something swimming had already been involved in and now they're finding out that the core training is, you know, is just as valuable as if you were taking a steroid, if you understand what I'm talking about. So, you know, our kids do a lot. I mean, we do a lot of ab work, you know, core training, that sort of thing. Programs like CATZ out on 183—those are huge. Our kids are in spin classes, you know, things like that. So it's just the whole nature of swimming. Interval training, you know, is a big thing.

When I swam, we didn't have goggles, you know? Once a week, a kid will come up to me, "I don't see how you swam without goggles." You know, just things like that. Obviously the big suit thing that went— you know— that's changed a lot so, you know. We shaved down, you know, but in Mexico City I wore my lucky Pan Am suit, you know, which was a 26-inch Speedo, you know? I was at the Pan American Games and I was in my room one day and I was writing a couple letters home. So the desk was up against the window and the room like went dark and I turned around—Wes Unseld—do you know that name?—was the center for the Baltimore Bullets. He was only like 6'8" but he was huge, you know? Well he was standing in the doorway and he was cutting all the light from the other side of the building coming through there and he wanted to trade some basketball shorts for a swimsuit.

[SJ:] Yours!?

[DR:] Yeah, and I was the only one there and I'm saying, "Wes, this won't even fit your ankles." He was the biggest dude I ever met in my life. I mean he was huge. So that's kind of funny, but—.

[SJ:] Well, I don't think I had too much else, unless you can think of anything, so—. I think they just wanted to kinda wrap up here, so—.

[end of interview, end recording]

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