

Where Are They Now?

Updates on Husky Alumni Eigil Flaathen and Lars Kolsrud

For the first time we are featuring two gymnasts in our *Where Are They Now?* column. Reason: they have very similar biographies. I had already had two excellent Norwegians, Alf Lind and Kjell Hansen, on my team and thought it would be great to have another. Eigil Flaathen applied for one of our State of Washington foreign student scholarships. One thing a coach always dreams of is a solid and consistent performer. I could almost always count on an excellent score from Eigil. His personal account follows.

On any other UW team Lars joined he would have been the star. As you can read he arrived at a time our team was the best in the U.S. I believe Lars gave a very modest version of his occupation. As I understand it he is the head physician (the boss) of the entire Norwegian international sports medicine program. (If I'm wrong Lars, I apologize.)

I should also add that both of these men are generous contributors to the WMGF.

-Coach Hughes

Eigil Flaathen

It all started in 1964 when I was approached by the Norwegian Gymnastics Federation. They asked if I would be interested in applying for a gymnastics scholarship at University of Washington. Kjell Hansen was finishing his studies and there was some interest in renewing the squad with another Norwegian. I applied and was admitted. That set the direction for the rest of my life.

I was finishing off my junior (under 20) competition season with the Nordic Junior Championships in November '64. I came in 8th, behind a promising Finn called Mauno Nissinen. The Finns won the team competition and we came in 2nd. About four years later I would meet up with Mauno at the UW.

I came to the UW in December '64 and was eligible in winter quarter '65. In this way I was able to be part of the team that came in 2nd in NCAA 1965 with Bob Hall as anchor and captain.

In the 1965/66 season the team was not as strong but came in 7th in the Nationals at Penn State. I think my own best result was 3rd All Around in PNW. I think this team with what we called the 4 F's (Flansaas, Finne, Fonseca, and Flaathen) made a record score on rings that stood for a long time.

The next highlight, however, was the trip with the Husky Gymnastics Club tour of: Japan - (training session with Yokio Endo); Australia - (won the team competition, and I did well all-around); New Zealand - (again we won the team competition, I came in 3rd all-around). Got to meet a lot of friendly people, finishing off at Waikiki Beach.

The 3rd season with the team was the best for me personally, but unfortunately not so good for the team.

Mike Flansaas, our best gymnast, was suffering a lot of injuries which definitely affected the team. I scored points regularly, came in 2nd in PNW, and got voted Most Valuable Varsity; but mostly I remember this was the year of introduction for Yoshi, Hide, and Sho to the UW and later Mauno.

Since I still had a year to go before graduation and my eligibility

was used up! Coach Eric was kind enough to offer Mike F. and I assistant coaching roles. I got to take care of side horse and p-bars for Yoshi, Sho, Hide, and Mauno. By far the best university team in the U.S. That was fun and inspirational, and I still got to work out. Adding Charlie Peters' progression, it was a "fantastic year" in hindsight.

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Eigil back at Hec Ed

Where Are They Now: Eigil Flaathen

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I graduated in June 1968 with a B.Sc. in Civil Engineering. Basically I had my last test, got a job at a Civil Engineering Consultant Firm in Bellevue and got married (to Carol Camp, one of George Lewis' YMCA gymnasts) in the same week! Carol and I will be taking a walk around the UW this June celebrating our 45th year Anniversary! Looking up our old stomping grounds! I kept in shape by working out at the pavilion after work; Bob Hall and I would come in late and catch and hour or 2 most week days. Carol and I lived up at Green Lake making for short distance to most things.

In 1970 we moved to Norway, mostly for me to finish my military service in Norway at the Army Corps of Engineers, but not before I was able to introduce a new Norwegian gymnast to the team, Lars Kolsrud. I kept active while in the military since I would get time off for workouts.

From 1971 there would be more and more coaching for both Carol and me. Due to work and family (two kids during the seventies), I didn't have the capacity to coach men but I followed a group of girls in a local club for one generation - meaning they were from around 10-11 years old to about 18-20 and we still keep in touch. Some of them became quite good and almost all of them look back on this period with joy, which I think is "cool."

Carol and I were responsible for making a basic gymnastics progression program at that time. She did floor ex. and ballet and I did vaulting. I was also coach for the Norwegian Woman's Team to the World Championships in 1978 in Strasbourg, France. By the way, here I got the chance to meet up with Mauno and Yoshi again.

From 1980 my workload, family and health considerations excluded active gymnastics, and made the path in to more aerobic activities. Together with some gymnastic friends, including Lars, we started jogging and cross country skiing; making goals, entering street runs

and cross-country skiing races. This gave us an excellent platform to stay in shape. Lars and I entered runs and mass-skiing "competitions." We would enter competitions in several European countries with absolutely no ambitions other than completing and enjoying the atmosphere. Berlin Half Marathon, right after the wall came down was amazing and Engadin Ski Marathon in Switzerland were highlights.

Lars and I did this actively for 15-20 years, and we still meet up for joint workouts, although now we are walking uphill, making "jog-like" movements on the flats and jogging downhill! But we are diligently noting down split times and times for every workout. What we'll do with it? Who knows!

I started work for a medium size Norwegian Construction Company in 1976 (VEIDEKKE INC.). At that time it employed around 400 people and I've been lucky enough to follow this company in a key position all these years until my retirement a couple of years ago. It has devel-

oped into Norway's by far largest company in the area of construction, building, property development, and civil engineering companies, and now employs around 6500 people with activities in all the Scandinavian countries, and is listed on the Norwegian Stock Exchange.

Nowadays we are a group of old gymnastic friends traveling to see high class gymnastic competitions. Last time was London Olympics and the World Cup Final in Stuttgart, Germany. Next is the World Championships in Antwerp, Belgium in October. In addition, we try to support some Norwegian talents in hope that we one day will be able to root for a Norwegian gymnast in the finals of a major International competition. In the meantime, we can root for some fabulous gymnasts from the U.S. and contemplate a fantastic life, thanks to gymnastics.

-Eigil



Eigil and Lars after a run with famous Norwegian Marathoner Grethe Waitz