

RADIO PROGRAM
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PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR HEALTH

"Body Building Sports - Swimming and Fencing"

- Allen -- We have with us tonight Herbert G. Allphin, coach of the varsity swimming team and teacher in our department of Physical Education. Swimming has become a very popular sport at the University. We also have Jim H. Raport, instructor, who has popularized fencing to an unusual degree among both men and women students. At first glance, perhaps, we do not think that there is a great deal of similarity between fencing and swimming, and I am going to ask Herb and Jim to tell us their notions of the similarity between these two sports. Herb, how would you compare swimming with fencing?
- Herb - Well, Dr. Allen, I would say that swimming compares with fencing first in rhythm. The fencer lunges forward with his weapon to make a touch, while the swimmer extends first one arm and then the other in gliding through the water. Timing, of course, is important in both of these body building sports.
- Jim - Yes, and we have the three weapons in fencing, the foil, the epee or dueling sword, and the saber, while in swimming we have the three basic strokes, which are the crawl, side and breast.
- Herb- Another thing - relaxation is very important in both sports. The fencer is relaxing all the time except when he is actually making a lunge; while the swimmer emphasizes relaxation all the time with the exception of the final stroke. Both fencing and swimming are dependent upon tonic starts.
- Allen- Well, these are interesting comparisons, and I am sure that most of us had not thought of such likenesses between swimming and fencing. But you know everything has a history, boys; suppose you give us a little of the history of swimming, Herb. I imagine swimming started with the amoeba, didn't it?
- Herb- I believe your statement about the amoeba is correct, Dr. Allen. Now, jumping from the amoeba to the cave man, historical pageants usually portray savage man first swimming by using a stroke which is related to the crawl in its simple fundamental coordinations. Professor James E. Dunlap, archaeologist of the University of Michigan, has found considerable evidence that swimming methods somewhat like the modern ones were used 3000 years ago. I had the good fortune to visit the British Museum during the summer of 1936, and in the famous Nimrod Gallery there is a bas-relief taken from the Palace of Nimrod, the date of which is about 880 B.C. It shows a fugitive escaping from a soldier by swimming a river with an overarm stroke. But getting back to the United States - do you know that Benjamin Franklin was the leading aquatic instructor of the late 1700's? He gave considerable instruction in swimming and he advocated the breast stroke. From this breast stroke, English swimmers devised the side overarm, and in the later 90's the Cavill brothers from Australia introduced the crawl. It is now called the Australian Crawl. And the crawl right now, Dr. Allen, is the fastest swimming stroke on record. The time on the 100 yard dash in early 1900 was about 67 seconds. Champions are now swimming it in under 53 seconds.