

Sports

Owego athlete striving for 1992 Olympics

By Richard A. Kiley

If you were stranded on an island in the middle of nowhere and had to choose one person who could help get you back to civilization, you might want to consider Ben Goodrich Jr.

Goodrich, a member of St. Patrick's Parish in Owego, epitomizes the great outdoorsman in the sports he pursues. The 19-year-old graduate of Owego Free Academy thrives in canoe/kayak racing as well as snowshoeing, and he excels in cross-county running as well.

We're talking the Southern Tier's version of a modern-day "Man for All Seasons."

Last month, Goodrich traveled to Indianapolis, where he trained among select athletes headed for the final Olympic Trials in "flat water" canoeing. Flat water canoeing requires an individual to kneel in his canoe and paddle only on one side, using his body to balance and steer the boat.

Goodrich came up just a bit short in the trials for the upcoming Olympic Games in Seoul, South Korea. However, he was one of only six canoeists asked earlier this month to work out with this summer's U.S. Olympic team in Lake Placid, NY.

The opportunity to train and rub shoulders with the sport's best didn't really overcome the SUNY-Cobleskill student until a gala affair on his last night in Lake Placid, the site of the 1980 Winter Olympic Games.

"It really didn't hit me until the last night I was there; here I was standing with some of the best athletes in the world. It was an amazing night," said Goodrich, who took a hiatus from his studies during the spring semester in order to train with other Olympic hopefuls under Paul Padgorski in Indian Harbor Beach, Fla. He has also endured intensive training sessions with Lee Abbott, who coached the women's Olympic canoe team in 1968 and 1972.

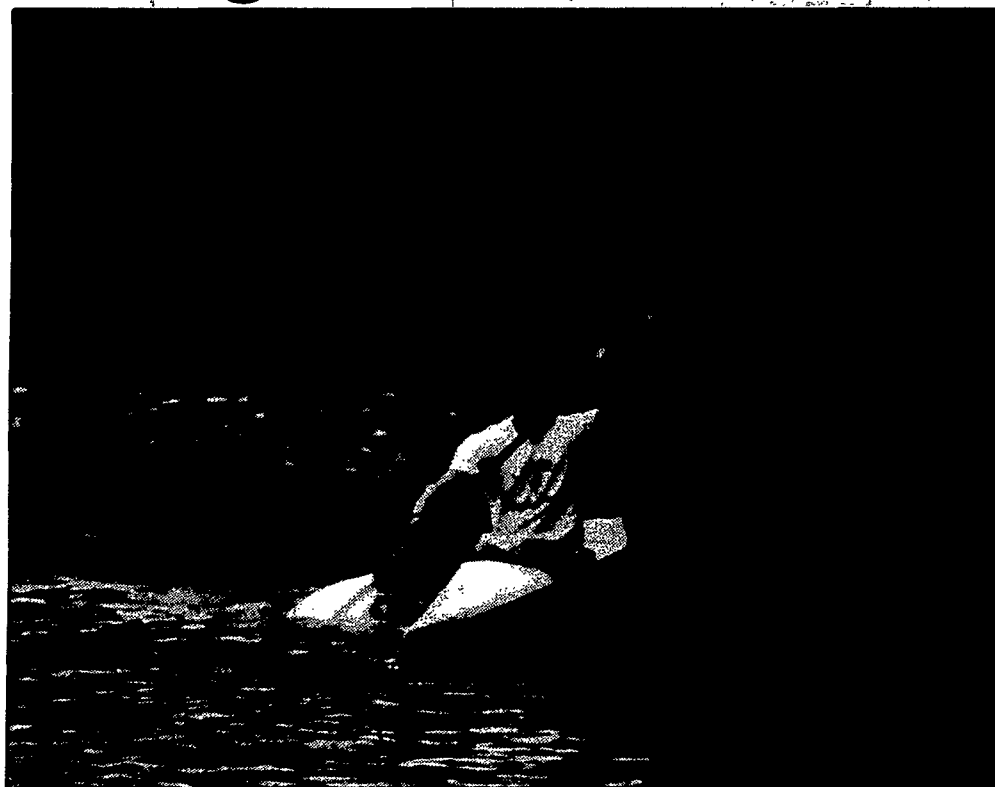
Goodrich's accomplishments have been amazing — in his canoe and kayak and on snowshoes. Last May, he was selected as the number-two member of the South Regional Olympic Canoe/Kayak Team at Raleigh, N.C., after he finished eighth in the 1,000-meter with a time of 4:21, and fifth in the 500-meter kayak race (2:08).

Goodrich has thoroughly dominated competition at the Empire State Games, placing among the top three finishers in all 10 of the events he has entered. In the 1987 Empire State Games in Lake Placid, he qualified at three different distances — the 100-, 200-, and 400-meter snowshoeing races — and brought home three gold medals. Goodrich's competitors were trudging through the snow long after he was done as the Owego native set three men's scholastic world records in the process. His times of 16.23 in the 100 meters and 35.62 in the 200 meters would have captured the open division in those races as well. His 1:25.70 finish in the 400 meters — just two seconds off the pace in that race — would have given

Classic track meet set

Rochester's third annual "Track Classic," which is open to all city residents, male and female, aged seven to adult, will take place Friday, July 22, (rain date, July 29) at the Edgerton Recreation Center/Jefferson High School track.

For information, call the Bureau of Recreation at (716)428-6755.



Dedication and hard work paid off for Ben Goodrich, who is one of the best athletes in canoe/kayak racing nationwide. Barring injuries, he should make the U.S. Olympic team in 1992.

him an open silver medal.

Goodrich took home one gold and two silver medals in the '86 winter games.

He started Olympic-style canoeing at the 1986 Empire State Summer Games, where he won one silver and one bronze medal. He added two bronze medals to his trophy case after the Empire State Summer games last August, and also earned a spot on the United States Junior Canoe Team.

It is ironic that Goodrich's accomplishments would not have been possible if not for chronic knee problems. Recurring knee ailments forced Goodrich to give up running cross country and track in high school, where he earned All Division II honors three consecutive years. Thus, he pursued canoeing more than he might otherwise had his knees been healthy.

"I probably would have continued with my running," said Goodrich, a descendant of one of the first families who settled in Owego. "When I was running, it was the top sport in my life. Then the knees started to go."

Goodrich gives much of the credit for his successes to his father, Ben Sr.

"I remember always pestering my dad to get into local races," Goodrich recalls. "He used to race canoes in the early 70s. He finally gave in."

The two have teamed up to win both races they have entered together — the Catatonk

Diocesan runners thrive at tryouts

Several diocesan high school track and field athletes, who dominated the competition during the school year, continued to run well at the Western Region tryouts for the upcoming Empire State Games.

McQuaid's Scott Romanowski, who was a part of the Knights' state champion 3,200 relay team, finished first in the scholastic men's 400 dash with a time of :49.6. Another Knight, Brad Sumner, took the top spot in the 800 meter run by finishing in 1:56.8.

Creek Canoe Regatta, in 1981 and 1987. "He was always there to give me that push when I needed it," said Goodrich, who is majoring in landscaping in college. "He always told me that if you give 100 percent in whatever you do, whether you win or lose, you can walk away feeling good that you gave it your all."

With the exception of his father, Ben has had difficulty keeping partners for canoe events. He paired up with a classmate, Kevin Noble, to take a silver and a bronze in the 1,000-meter and 500-meter canoeing events at the Empire State Summer Games, but Noble has since given up the sport.

"It's really tough to find a partner. A lot of people didn't want to practice or work as hard as I do," Goodrich said. "I seem to wear my partners out."

"He just loves canoe racing, he's been doing it since he was 12," said his mother Cindy.

Since then, Ben Jr. has been making things tough on the competition.

Barring unforeseen injuries, Goodrich's prospects look very promising for the 1992 Olympic Games. And although he says he's not one to make predictions, Goodrich likes the chances of this summer's U.S. Olympic team.

"We've got the possibility to win a medal in every boat we put in the water," he said. "This is the strongest team we've ever had."

Sports
Shorts

Softball statistics

Paul Forte, who last month concluded his first spring at the helm of the girls' varsity softball team at Cardinal Mooney High School, recently passed on statistics from this spring's season in which the Cardinals reached the Section 5 Class AA semifinals before losing to eventual-champion Webster.

The Cards outscored opponents by about a 9-4 average. Cheryl Lennox, Julie Kolb and Gia Cucinelli were the main offensive weapons for this year's Mooney team. In 99 official at bats, Lennox pounded out 51 hits — including 11 doubles and six triples — to lead the team with a .515 batting average. Lennox did not strike out once this season either. She also led the team in RBIs with 43 and was tied with Shannon Barry in stolen bases — both had 17 — behind Dawn Pickering (18). She scored 40 runs this season to also lead the team.

Cucinelli was second on the team in batting (.468) and third in RBIs (27). She hit safely 36 times in 77 official at bats. Among her hits were four doubles, six triples and one home run. Cucinelli struck out just three times, scored 30 runs and also stole five bases.

Kolb, like Lennox, closed out an outstanding softball career at Mooney with yet another stellar season. In 82 official at bats, she hit safely 36 times for a .439 batting average. Included in her offensive arsenal was one double, three triples and a team-leading three home runs. She was second on the team with 30 RBIs and also scored 30 runs during the season.

Mooney pitcher Noelle Feeney held opponents at bay most of the season, recording a 3.73 ERA. To illustrate Forte's meticulous statistics, Feeney threw 1,187 strikes and 1,110 balls in 166 innings of work. She struck out 137 batters and walked 124. Feeney often helped her own cause by batting .361 (two doubles, one triple) with 13 RBIs. She scored 16 runs and stole four bases.

As a team, Mooney batted .325 this season with 268 hits in 825 official at bats. Extra-base hits included 32 doubles, 19 triples and six home runs. Cardinal batters walked 141 times while striking out just 64. The Cards scored 265 runs this season and stole 123 bases. The team fielding percentage was a very respectable .854.

Mooney pitchers — mostly Feeney — allowed 159 hits in 740 opponent at bats. Overall, Mooney opponents batted .215.

Thanks Paul.

Tee-ing off for Easter Seals

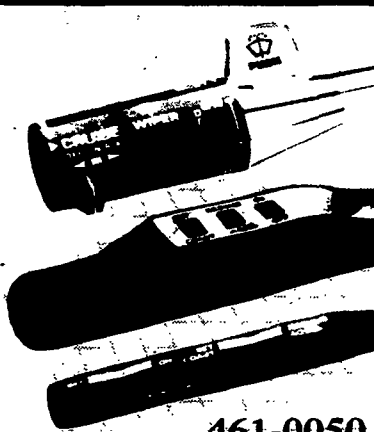
Golfers at Rochester-area courses will have the opportunity to help disabled children and adults in the community — and to compete for valuable prizes — at the third-annual Genesee Brewing Co./Easter Seals Hole-In-One, Closest to the Pin Contest. The contest will take place at various golf courses on Saturdays July 16 and 23, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Call (716)232-2540 to find out which courses are participating or if you are interested in volunteering to help with the venture.

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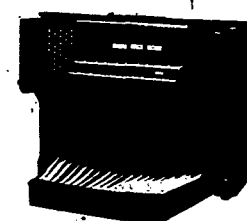
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