

Lars Kolsrud

How did it start?

As a young teenager in Norway, I was a promising gymnast, two times Norwegian Junior Champion, silver medalist in the Nordic Junior Championship, and internationally I had defeated Germany's best gymnast at my age, Eberhard Gienger. This combined with the fact that the five-year older Norwegian, Eigil Flaathen, had been a Husky gymnast for four years, and he presented my name to Coach Eric Hughes. I was asked if I was interested in a scholarship at the UW, and of course I was.

My main goal when I came to Seattle in the fall 1969, was to be so good in gymnastics that I could qualify for the Olympic Games and represent Norway in Munich 1972. Very soon the Japanese Huskies, Yoshi, Hide, and Sho, gave me a strong reality check. They were excellent gymnasts, much better than me, and still they were in USA because they were not good enough to represent Japan in the Olympic Games! Should I keep my goal for the Olympics – and if I succeeded – be pleased being placed around 100 in the Olympic competition? My first months in Seattle really shook my dreams, and pragmatic as I am, I changed my goal. How could I do gymnastics, keep my scholarship, and prepare for an education that could give me something else than gymnastics to build my life on in the future?

I left UW after two very educational good years and happy to be a "letterman" in gymnastics both years and qualify for the NCAA in 1970 (going with Yoshi who was the overall winner with Hide placing third). Seattle has ever since had a place for me as my "second home" and I have been watching "Frasier" and "Gray's Anatomy" eagerly to get a glimpse of the well-known city skyline. Those years also gave me a roommate and a "brother" (with different father and mother), the Canadian gymnast, Ron Hunter. Now, forty-two years later, we still call each other every Christmas to update each other on our lives. Ron and I have also arranged to meet skiing in the Austrian Alps and up in Whistler Mountains, visiting Seattle and Victoria and we even met in Würzburg in Germany to run a street race, celebrating 2500 years since the first historic marathon run.

This last summer Chuck Sanders visited my hometown, Oslo, and I was happy to be home to meet him again after all these years. Chuck looked the same and I believe he is the same - except on the pommel horse.

How has my life been since my University of Washington campus days?

I started at the Norwegian School of Physiotherapy in the fall of '71 after I returned from University of Washington. During my intern year as a physiotherapist, I felt a desire to learn more anatomy/physiology. The best organized way to do this turned out to be at the Medical School at the University of Oslo, so I continued my education at the Medical Department in my hometown.

As a physiotherapist/physician, specializing in Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine, I have reached my goal to be part of the Olympic Games. Not fulfilling my big childhood dream as a competitor in gymnastics, but being part of the Norwegian Health Team as a Team Physician. I have been working in sports medicine since 1984 and full time at the Olympic Center in Oslo since 1998. My patients at the Olympic Center are all the best athletes in Norway, representing both summer and winter sports. This way, I have been part of the Olympic Games in Seoul 1988, Lillehammer 1994, Sidney 2000, Salt Lake 2002, Turin 2006, Vancouver 2010, and I am now preparing with the Norwegian winter athletes for the Games in Sochi 2014. I have written two books about my experience with the Olympic Athletes ("In the head of a top Athlete" and "How to reach your potential"). The last book is being translated to English these days, and will probably be printed and called: "Passion and Motivation, the very best Medication."

Since my gymnastic days at UW, I have had contact with the Athletic Department's former Head Physician, Dr. James Garric. Through letters, his books, talks and lectures at Sport Medicine Meetings, and two visits to his Sport & Dance Clinic in San Francisco, he has been a kind of professional mentor to me.

(Continued on page 7)



Lars in his UW days

Where Are They Now: Lars Kolsrud

(Continued from page 6)

I am married to a longtime friend and former gymnast, Ann-Helen. We have a very positive, good, and fun life together, sharing both old friends and interests, since she is very active as an International Gymnastic Judge and working for the our National and the International Anti-Doping Bureau (WADA).

Eigil got me to University of Washington. I knew Eigil from gymnastics in the early sixties and by far, I consider him my best friend. When we both were back home in Norway in the seventies, we followed each other as male coaches for the Norwegian Gymnastic Team for women, but our close contact and friendship has developed mostly through training for and taking part in 10k and half-marathon races. We are both slow runners (moving our legs from the knees and

down), but we have met each other wearing running shoes about two times weekly for more than 25 years. That makes a lot of running activity, but more im-

portant, a lot of good talking and friendly guiding during our training sessions. Eigil has now retired from his top job in the biggest Norwegian Construction firm, Veidekke, and as he is not so often in Oslo I have had to replace him with "another dog," Trixie, as a running companion. Eigil is working out more than ever in his hometown, Drammen, is in



Lars and his current running companion

very good shape, and he does his "happy handstand" and cross split sit just as well as he did during his UW days.

-All the best, from Lars