

# SPEAKING of SPORTS

By DON WATSON



Next Monday evening at the Outrigger Canoe club the people of Hawaii will pay tribute to a native son—Bill Smith—the greatest swimmer the world has ever seen.

Bill is back home after an absence of a couple of years, part of which time he was attending university on the mainland, but most of which he spent as a specialist in the United States navy. . . . It so happens that Smith is now assigned to duty here. . . .

He slipped into town without fanfare, but as soon as announcement was made in these columns that he was back a group of sportsmen got their heads together and planned the reception that is being put on Monday night in his honor. . . .

We have been fortunate in being able to work with the group that planned this event, and gratified that the response to the reception proposal was so spontaneous. . . .

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This is not the first time Hawaii has been able to call a native son the greatest swimmer in the world. . . . The first was Duke Kahanamoku—'way back in 1911 and up into the 20s. . . . During Duke's long reign no swimmer could touch him in the sprint events. . . . Bill Smith occupies the same position today. . . . You can not compare Smith and Duke as swimmers, any more than you can compare the boxers of today with those of yesterday. . . . Conditions and styles have changed. . . . However, having seen both Duke and Bill perform during their championship periods, all we can say is that it would be the greatest aquatic spectacle of all time if we could see these two compete against each other with both in their prime. . . .

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## WOULD LIKE TO SWIM AGAINST FORD

The only swimming great in the United States today who can compare with Smith is Alan Ford, the great Yale sprint swimmer. . . . Ford holds the record in the 100 yard event—an event which we had always thought was too short a distance for Smith. . . . But during the past two years Smith has brought his time in the century down to such a point that a race between these two over that distance would really be something to see. . . . Smith thought he was going to have a chance to meet Ford in the 100 yard swim last year in Michigan, and it was a big disappointment to him when Ford was unable to perform.

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At any distance over the century, we know that Smith would be the master of Ford. . . . And perhaps it would even be true in the shorter distance. . . . But the main thing is that Bill Smith is back home, and the sports folks of these islands are proud to welcome him. Bill is still young and he has his best years in swimming ahead of him. . . . Right now he is doing a great job in teaching navy men how to swim. . . . But as soon as the war is over and he has completed his navy duties, he will be back in swimming competition. . . . Already there is a standing invitation for him to make a trip to Australia.