

"MAC OF 2YD" *A Sporting Personality Well Known To Listeners*

"MAC of 2YD," as he is known both personally and anonymously, will cheerfully talk about any sport ever known. If he knows nothing of it out of his great store of sporting knowledge, or can find no reference to it in his 50-year-old collection of scraps and cuttings, he is just the chap to make it up to please his audience. And not many would know the difference, for Mac is a born talker, a brilliant raconteur, and an accomplished mimic.

He has learned to talk to microphones in an exacting school. At the end of last month, Station 2YD, where he now conducts the weekly sports session, broadcast a reconstruction of the famous boxing match in which Jack Dempsey knocked Jess Willard helpless in three rounds. Many listeners, among them many who know the voices personally, telephoned afterwards trying to settle arguments about the origin of the record from which the broadcast had been made. Actually, it was made in 2YD studios by S. J. Hayden and Mac, before Mr. Hayden went to America at the beginning of this year. (He is now in Hollywood).

They had disguised their voices, taken unto themselves an American accent, and described the fight as imaginary announcements at the ringside. Research for such broadcasts as this was carried out by Mac, whose store of information about sport is gargantuan. He checked account after account until the script for the broadcast was accurate word for word, covering blow by blow.

Chess with King Alfred

But not all the broadcasts of this original pair were done from scripts. That boxing reconstruction was one of several made for a series called "Scenes from the Sporting Past." To cap the series, the 2YD Sportsmen decided that chess players should have their episode. So they sat down and, after a moment's discussion, made, impromptu, an hilarious record describing a chess match between Alfred the Great and Napoleon Bonaparte. It broadcast as if weeks had been spent in its preparation.

But Mac is by no means only the voice at the other end. He knows sport thoroughly, and he knows New Zealand thoroughly.

At St. Patrick's College he played in the first eleven and first fifteen, and won handball championships in partnership with Cam Malfroy. Baseball was added to his list at school, too, in spite of the fact that he started badly by pitching his first ball straight into a master's ribs.

Miniature Harry Lauder

But this small fame was nothing to his fame before the days of secondary school. When he was still just six years of age (1914), Mac was famous as a miniature edition of Sir Harry Lauder. He won at provincial competitions, and toured the



"MAC" STARTED YOUNG: Station 2YD's sports expert was once a child entertainer

country with his comedian's face and his voice and his kilts. During War Number One, he performed at 387 concerts in aid of patriotic funds.

But his youthful success was behind him when he entered secondary school, and by 1926 he began what he calls "knocking about." He started farming and he ended (before 2YD found a use for him), in a hard rock mine two thousand feet below Westland.

In between, he had been trying his hand at more sports. Rugby, of course, was his best love. In 1929, he was in the Palmerston North district and playing half-back for Manawatu in the same team as Rod McKenzie. Then he shifted to Pahiatua and played the last games of the season representing Bush. There he stayed for three or four seasons, playing inter-club matches with Mahoney's Konini Club team, and representing Bush each season. By 1933 he was at Masterton. Here he struck a bad patch in form, but recovered himself, and was picked for Wairarapa. But by now he was "getting lazy," and stayed on the farm instead of travelling to play Wellington.

Cricket and League

Restless again, in 1935 he was in Canterbury, following a harvesting mill, and that same year removed to the West Coast, at the invitation of a chance-met acquaintance at a cricket match. For a while, his cricket was no good, but Billy Vincent (who once played half-back for Canterbury), put him up to the trick of batting on a matting wicket, and he managed better.

When winter came, there was no Rugby there for him, so he took up League football. His last game was thrilling as only the Coast can make a game thrilling. He was placed to mark Paddy Scott ("another A. E. Cooke" was how Mac described this player), and early in

the game, when he just reached Paddy's boot in a frantic tackle, had a finger badly broken.

But much depended on the game. He went back on with some improvised splints, and they fought it out, losing by one point. However, most of the excitement was not about the game, but the bets placed on it, and when Mac discovered that one man on his side had bet on the opposite, he handed in his jersey. That was in 1936, and in 1937 he was invited to join the NBS. Then began his partnership with Sid Hayden at 2YD. The pair made a very special name for themselves and for "The Little Station with the Big Programmes," and by 1939, when Hayden was getting ready to leave, Mac and the other station officers had no mean tradition to live up to.

The war killed his sports session for some months, but recently Mac has been able to revive it, and it goes from success to success once again.

Card-Index Mind

So far as sport is concerned, he has a card-index mind.

He is one of those exasperating people who know all the statistical information there is to know about sport, and one of those rare people who combines knowledge of detail and theory with a real practical appreciation of his subject.

He is married now, and confesses that he plays a "nice hand at croquet," but no one would be surprised to see him appear and acquit himself well on any local sports ground, any time, at any game. If he has one passion, it is for cricketing records. He has an invaluable collection of references, dating back to last century; and one of the sporting highlights he remembers was the time Merritt bowled Woolley around the legs at the Basin Reserve.

If he has another passion, it is athletics, and two of his most sparkling memories concern the time Rose beat Savidan by a touch at Athletic Park in the last Australasian championships, and that miserable day last year when Boot ran that splendid mile in the mud of Basin Reserve.

But he refuses to be a specialist. Cricket, athletics, boxing, racing, Rugby, they all come easily to him. In all these sports, he combines theory with experience; but he does not mind us warning listeners that when they hear him talk about swimming they are listening to a man who cannot swim.

His name, by the way, is McCarthy—Winston McCarthy

BOXING NOTES

D ARMSTRONG, secretary of the Manawatu Boxing Association, reports that everything is going well with the heavy-weight contest for Boxing Day. Both the principals are training hard, and interest is mounting high.

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Cliff Hanham may be a sparring partner for Strickland over his last fortnight's training. A suggestion that Strickland should do his training in Waimate, was turned down, and Hanham is now likely to come to Wellington.

While Hanham is the light-heavy and middle-weight champion of New Zealand, his experience so far has been mainly with locals. This chance to gain further experience is too good to miss.

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There will be no judges when Strickland meets the Alabama Kid. It has been decided that the referee or referees for the professional fights will work on their own. Mr. Lucas, who is assisting the Manawatu Boxing Association to run the big show, is not greatly in favour of judges. He believes that the third man—if he knows his job—should not be hampered with judges, who, in many cases, cannot be considered experts.

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Earle Wimsett, prominent Palmerston North sportsman and president of the Manawatu Boxing Association, has always been a keen supporter of boxing. For many years, he has worked for the sport in the Manawatu district, and it is fitting that he should be the head of the executive that will stage an outstanding fixture in New Zealand boxing history.

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The ex-welter-weight champion, Neville Mudgway, is back in training, and has offered to meet anyone his weight in a ten-rounder for charity. When this was announced, Benny Leonard, Australian welter, was quick to take it up. It has been suggested that a bout between them would swell the patriotic funds.

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Young Gildo, who has been watching the boxing side of the work at the Auckland gym, since Frank Piercey went into camp, is likely to return to Australia shortly, as bouts in the Dominion are scarce. In Australia, he is sure to be in demand.



NEVILLE MUDGWAY (right), with Billy Hedberg, Wellington trainer