

Horst Görlitz

Dear Sammy

Finally I have time and am sufficiently healthy (I was weak and exhausted like a wreck) to write a short accomplishment about my diving story; with some other remarks.

I was born 20 September 1921 in Halle/Saale - means I am a Virgin.

1928-1938: At school and during this time development into an all around sportsman.

Athletics, handball, artistic ice skating, gymnastics and at last diving. And on order from our sport-teacher I taught gymnastic for other pupils of my class. The first step to becoming a coach?

1938-1941: Apprentice airplane building; and during this time specializing for gymnastics and diving. Reaching in both the quality of national youth interest together with my friend Joachim Scheffel. Also I made a remote-study to prepare for my goal to study and become

an engineer. I made the apprentice examination with awards, gaining a scholarship for engineer

with start at October. This was interrupted in December because of the 2nd world war and transfer

to the construction office for production.

1944: In September military duty followed by reserve officer training, than war insert.

Wounded 26. 04. 45 close to Straubing followed by transfer to a hospital at Mallersdorf.

There amputation of the right lower leg. During my prison time at Mallersdorf I had a very pleasant speech with one U.S. prison guard. He said at the end: Can you tell me why we have to

kill each other? We had the same opinion!

1946: Discharge from the hospital and after quarantine home to Halle/Saale.

Arriving the 01. 05. 1946

Being home at Halle, I worked in a construction office and my old friend Joachim Scheffel convinced me to become a diving coach. His argument: 1. We never had a coach and 2. You may become rusty behind a desk. He convinced me... and we started to get back

our training possibilities. Then we organized a diving camp with old friends and organized meets with spectators to earn money to pay the 7 days camp. A special attendee to one of our meets was Julius Feicht ...the future General Secretary of the GDR swimming - federation.

On 01. 07. 1950 I became the head coach of the diving section. But looking possible also at FRG diving contests I was fired and worked again in a construction office.

Nevertheless, I was chosen as the head coach at the European-Championships 1954 at Torino

because of the quality of my divers. But because of visa problems the GDR-team did not arrive until the night before the start of the contests. We had no chance to try the boards and prepare

properly for the events. Consequently we were unable to achieve the expected results.

Joachim Scheffel, who always beat second place winner Udalow (URS) finished 4th.

Waltraud Scipek, who a few weeks before had beaten Tschumicewa (URS) the winner of a contest in Odessa and Torino, finished 5th.

Then on 01.01.1955 I became the diving coach of the Sportclub-Sience-Halle and remained in that job until October 1955 when I escaped to Karlsruhe because I could no longer agree to remain in the GDR.

In that time the diving secretary at the FRG, my old friend Heinz Plumanns organized international diving camps in Bad Kissingen and I was called for coaching. During that time I also worked from 24.10.-31.12.1957 as constructeur and got a invitation from the FIN to become the national diving coach.

It worked and beginning 01.01.1958 I was the national coach of Italy at the FIN. It was not easy, because I had to learn Italian and also to understand the Italian manner of life. In that sense I had good help from Carlo Dibiasi, the father of Klaus. The first experience was... there was no national diving school. But as time went by I was learning my way and getting to understand the Italian coaches more and more. With their support I was soon able to introduce my methods of coaching and at the European-Championships 1958 we had divers making the finals.

At the Rome Olympics 1960 our diver Lamberto Mari finished 6th and Walter Messa placed 10th from 3 meter. Unfortunately Antonio Sbordone did not perform at his best because he was diving with a broken toe. It is interesting to know, Lamberto Mari did a 5134 without the pike to break the twist when I began coaching him. We had to change the dive to the 5235 and also change the direction of the twist. It went well and Lamberto had much greater success. For sure, I had also quietly continued my relationship with old friends Joachim Scheffel and Rolf Sperling. One other pleasure was the start of my friendship with Sammy Lee and Dick Smith.

After the Olympics in Rome the advance of Italian diving continued. Italo Salice won a European 6 Nations TV contest from 3 meter with less DD but high quality performance. And with the development of Klaus Dibiasi and Giorgio Cagnotto came the Italian generation of top divers.

In 1964 at Tokyo Klaus Dibiasi won the silver medal in the 10 meter platform and if I remember well Giorgio Cagnotto placed 10th in the 3 meter event.

Following their successful experiences in the Tokyo Olympics the Italian divers continued to perform well.

At the Utrecht European Championships in 1966 Klaus won the gold medal in the platform event and Giorgio placed 3rd on 3 meter (with only 303c). And at the European Cup 1967 Klaus placed 1st on 10 meter and Giorgio won gold in the 3 meter event (now with 305c).

With regard to the diving contests Klaus and Giorgio are different types.

Klaus needs time to adapt when he arrives at a new venue. Giorgio was quick to adapt but sometimes would lose his concentration in the new environment. We tested that once again in Phoenix, Arizona in 1967 at a pre-Olympics event. It worked out well for both Klaus and Giorgio. On the basis of that positive experience, in 1968 we made arrangements to have a diving camp at Long Beach, California. Our goal was to help the divers adjust to the time difference between Italy and the western part of the United States. We wanted to overcome any jet lag from the long trip and properly prepare Klaus and Giorgio for their ultimate destination... Mexico City and the 1968 Olympic Games.

But that did not work out as planned. Unfortunately we received information at the last minute that the pool at Long Beach would be closed during our scheduled visit. Consequently we had to delay our travel plans and finally made the trip to Mexico City with the entire Italian team. That was good for Klaus and bad for Giorgio.

The result at the Olympics 1968:

Klaus won gold on 10 meter, silver on 3 meter. Giorgio placed 8th on 10 meter and 5th on 3 meter. Not bad, but could have been better.

Two members of our diving team, Italo Salice and Bruno Rossi dived well, but not good enough to reach the finals.

I have to compliment Carlo Dibiasi the father of Klaus, who did an excellent job as Klaus' home town coach.

After the Olympics the German diving chairman Hans Sandhöfer begged me to come back to Germany.

I said yes if I have no offer from Italy by a certain date. The Italian authorities did not renew our arrangement

by the specified date and I returned to Germany. Dr. Saini, the general secretary from the CONI apologized

profusely and tried to convince me to accept Italy's belated request to stay on as their national coach.

But I could not break my promise to Hans Sandhöfer.

From 01. 01. 1969 to 31.12. 1981 I was the national coach in the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG.)

Not an easy job, because there was too much bureaucracy. The authorities demanded so much of our time for their

requirements, that it took away the time to attend to our basic work. Therefore with the school director,

I founded a training school at Karlsruhe. On the plus side... the work with the home coaches became good by

that time. Our top diver in those days was Norbert Huda. He was fortunate to have received coaching in the USA

and came home with a 205 and 305. He had some problems however that needed to be worked out. Norbert

had developed a wrong kick out and entering technique. We had to change the finish on his dive to the right way which he successfully mastered. He went on to compete on 3 meter at the 1972 München Olympics finishing in 8th place. Norbert received special recognition for performing the best forward 3 and 1/2 somersaults tuck. Our other divers did a good job but did not achieve top results.

Dieter Dörr was diving well and learned the 5235. Unfortunately he could not achieve a state of total awareness during the execution of the dive and finally had to abandon it. Discouraged, he thought about quitting competition altogether. After some discussion we agreed to work carefully together and I changed the dive to a 5152. It worked and later on after I had finished my duty with the FRG he used it and placed 3rd in the European Championships. Other excellent divers on our team were Ursula Möckel, Renate Piotraschke, Stefan Korsten and after my time, Albin Killat who won the European Diving Championship coached by Beppo Herweck.

I resigned from the position as National Coach in the FRG citing my handicap. It was not the truth...I was sour about the bureaucracy! I continued to work in diving and went on to assist the coaches in Italy, Austria, Switzerland, Norway, Finland and South Africa.

With regard to my development as an autodidactic coach it was a great help for me to begin with a study of engineering. With that knowledge I started coaching using the scientific principles I learned in biomechanics. Up until that time biomechanics was a foreign word in coaching.

Furthermore I would like to confirm that after the Olympics at Tokyo a gymnastics coach and I developed a foam rubber mattress for dry land coaching. This equipment provided a soft way to land in a sitting or back position removing the danger and the fear of getting hurt. That was a key to coaching the take off and kick out for dives like 205c, 305c, 5134d and 5335. I used it also very much coaching Giorgio Cagnotto.

And now finally I have finished this series of recollections.

With best wishes to you and Roz, as ever your Horst

au·to·di·dact
noun

a person who has learned a subject without the benefit of a teacher or formal education; a self-taught person.