

Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf

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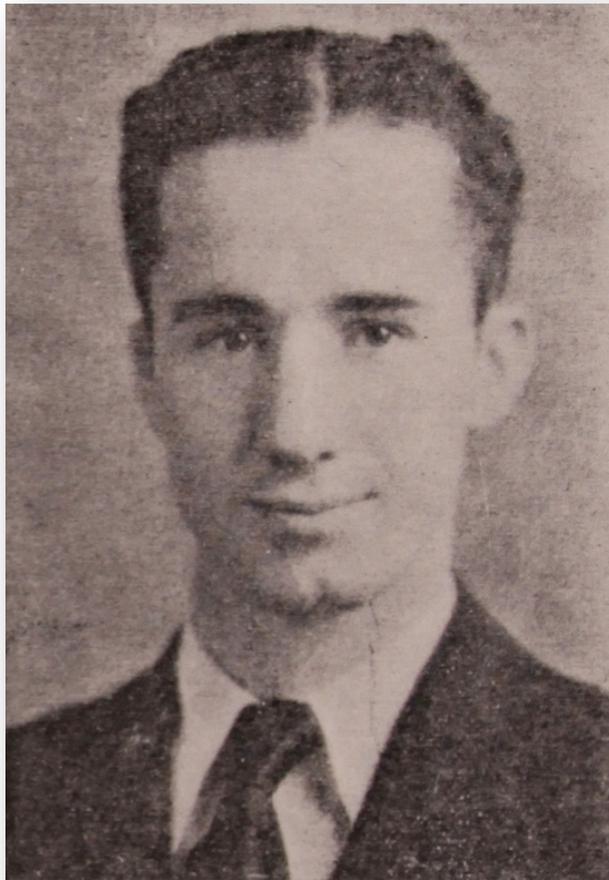
Note

It is possible that the Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf was created in 1945 after the first Far West Athletic Association of the Deaf tournament took place during that year and Utah Deaf athletics participated as The Silent Club. The UACD logo shows the year 1947.

Most of the historical information is written by John (Jack) F. White, a sport enthusiast, published in the “Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf: 50th Anniversary Celebration 1947 – 1997” Program Book.

For years past, the Salt Lake Silent Club, founded by John (“Jack”) F. White, a 1932 Utah School for the Deaf graduate, sponsored a basketball team. They would play games against hearing teams from Fort Douglas (a military training base next to the University of Utah), the Salt Lake City Fire and Police Departments, and the Utah School for the Deaf. In 1945 doors were opened for them to compete out of state and regionally in the midst of their own fellow people - Deaf athletes. During that year, the Far West Athletic Association of the Deaf (FAAD) was formed for the purpose of Deaf athletic clubs to meet and compete against each other (White, 1997).

The FAAD was founded under the direction of Art Kruger, a well-known Gallaudet alumnus. The association covered the entire western part of the United States, such as Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, Idaho and Utah. Art asked Utah native, Jack White, an active club member, if the Salt Lake Silent Club would participate in the FAAD basketball tournament in Los Angeles in March 1946. He promised Jack \$350 if the team would go and play against other Deaf club teams in the tournament. Jack saw this as a golden opportunity and called up a meeting of ball players between Salt Lake City and Ogden (White, 1997).



John (Jack) F. White

A few Ogden and Salt Lake City ball players attended a special meeting where Jack White informed them about Art Kruger's request and asked to organize a new club. At the meeting he explained about the tourney and how it would benefit the team to building a competitive relationship with FAAD. He then made a proposal to call the team "Salt Lake Athletic Club for the Deaf," but some of the players disagreed because they were from Ogden and the title did not represent them collectively. Everyone continued discussing possible team names and finally decided on "Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf",

John F. White's records -
Basketball
Player, coach and manager of Salt Lake Silent Club
and President 1932-1945
Soft ball - Baseball player - S.L. Silent Club, Wards,
(basketball) Western Paper Co. and Overlooks.
1932-1945
One of first organizers of Utah Athletic Club for the Deaf
1945
First basketball player - coach to LA's FAAD
1946
First Secretary of UACD - 10 years
Vice Pres of UACD - 5 years
President of UACD - 10 years
NWAAD Vice Pres - 1 year
NWAAD Secy. - Treas. - 6 years
NWAAD Acting Pres to New York's AAAD in 1968
AAAD Delegate to St Louis AAAD to win bid for 1977
AAAD for Salt Lake City
Athletic Director, coach
and manager of Sports - 21 years
of UACD
NWAAD Delegate - 12 years
AAAD Delegate - 8 years -
NWAAD Tournament Chairman - 1976
AAAD Credential Committee - 1977
NWAAD Tournaments - 18 years
AAAD Auditing committee in New York - 1968
over 40 years of service

Jack White's UCAD Records

a.k.a. UACD. George Laramie was selected as both president and coach while Jack was chosen as vice-president and assistant coach. Larry Anderson became the secretary/treasurer (White, 1997).

Before preparing for the tournament in Los Angeles, California, the newly formed club needed a gym to practice. Jack met with a hearing acquaintance, John M. Knight, who happened to be the Salt Lake

Police Commissioner, and asked him for permission to use the police precinct's basketball gym on State Street and First South for the UACD team to practice and play games. The request was granted. The team practiced and played games with the Salt Lake City Police Department, the Salt Lake Fire Department, Fort Douglas and other teams (White, 1997).

As the tournament time approached several UACD players dropped out, dropping the team roster to a mere six players. Rather than panicking, Jack knew there were a few prospective guys out in the “woods” and recruited Ross Thurston. Alton Fisher from Hooper, Utah and Jack Downey from Boise, Idaho (White, 1997).

George Laramie, the team coach, could not join the team at Los Angeles. Jack White took his place. However, the team faced another dilemma; the players did not have sufficient funds to travel to Los Angeles stay at a hotel. Jack did not want to miss out on a great opportunity for his team to participate in the out-of-state tournament.

So he decided to withdraw \$200 from his savings to help support his team and covered the expenses for a \$22 (per person?) round trip on a Greyhound bus and hotel reservations.

Three of the players rode in Larry Anderson’s car.

Jack selected Ross

Thurston to be the team’s delegate during the tournament. On the way to Los Angeles, the team stopped at Las Vegas. According to Jack, the place was “just a small town with a general store and a motel.” They rode on the bus to Los Angeles, anticipating the chance to compete with other Deaf clubs (White, 1997).



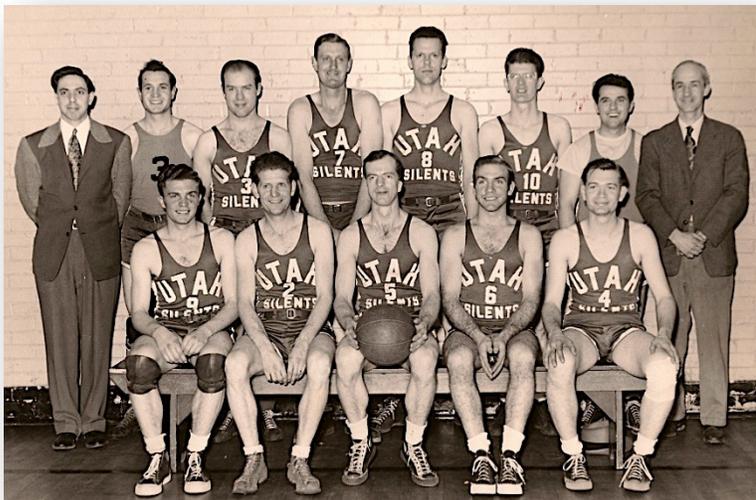
Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf in Oakland, California, 1947

The Utah team lost the first game against the Berkeley Club but won the next two games. As a result, UACD earned the consolation championship. However, UACD lost four best team players to the Los Angeles Club for the Deaf (White, 1997).

Art Kruger, the tournament secretary, kept his promise and granted UACD \$350 from the tournament funds. From that amount Jack was reimbursed \$200 and the rest of \$150.00 went into the UACD treasury.

In 1947, the FAAD basketball tournament was held in Oakland, California where UACD won the consolation bracket, beating Hollywood by the score of 46-44 and last, San Francisco 32-15. Los Angeles was the repeat FAAD champions. Jack once again coached the UACD team. Other than grabbing the consolation championship, UACD was victorious in their bid to host the 1948 tournament on February 27 and 28 in Salt Lake City.

To host the 1948 FAAD tournament in Salt Lake City, Ross Thurston was chosen as the chairman. Ross proceeded to organize a committee. The committee consisted of Larry Anderson (secretary & program), John “Jack” F. White (entertainment), Rodney



Utah Athletics Club of the Deaf in Salt Lake City, Utah, 1948

Walker (treasurer), Eugene Plumby (trophies), George L. Laramie (reservations), Earl P. Smith (concessions), Joseph Burnett (entertainment for Ogden Division), and Earl Rogerson (tickets). In addition, the

members of the UACD Board of Trustees were Verl W. Thorup (chairman), Catherine J. Morgan and Gladys Hind. The games were held at the Deseret Gymnasium at 37 College Place. The gym was reserved and paid for two nights, at the cost of \$200. To raise funds for the tournament, the committee and UACD sold many raffle tickets, had several

parties and dinners to raise funds on the plaza where the large water fountain is now, between State and Main Streets and South and North Temple Streets, behind the Joseph Smith Memorial Building and near the present Church Office Building (White, 1997; Gary L. Leavitt, personal communication, 1995; Walker, 2006).

In 1957, UACD decided to leave the FAAD region to join the new the Northwest Athletic Association of the Deaf (NWAAD) region, but the players had to pay for transportation, hotel and meals. In 1957, the team traveled to California, Idaho, Oregon, Washington, and Canada (White, 1997).

About 1958, out of curiosity, and with an invitation to attend the meeting of the Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf, Rodney W. Walker was elected as the UACD president; he held this office for ten consecutive years.

He felt that they should start UACD Newsletter which would be for members, and he nominated his wife, Georgia Hendricks Walker, his first wife, to be the editor and publisher.

The dues were one dollar per year. The number of members increased three or four fold, to a total of 175. The newsletter was the reason for the increase in membership, though new members did not have to participate in sports such as basketball, bowling, or softball (Walker, 2006).

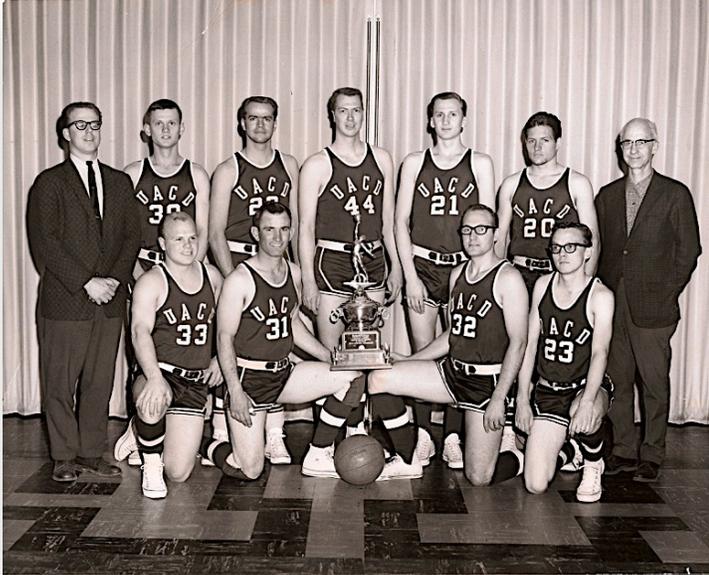


Members of the Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf

In 1964, UACD team went to the Oakland tournament where they won the NWAAD championship and the right to enter the American Athletic Association of the

Deaf tournament in Philadelphia. Leon Curtis was the coach and John F. White was assistant coach and manager. Although the UACD team lost three games, placing eighth,

they were awarded a two-foot-tall sportsmanship trophy. They got a lot of applause for the player's clean style of play (White, 1997).



Members of the Utah Athletics Club of the Deaf, district champs of Northwest Athletic Association of the Deaf, pose with trophies, 1964

In 1970, UACD was incorporated under the laws of Utah. Today, it is affiliated

with several regional and national organizations and actively promotes several sports for Deaf people in Utah. Eventually, UACD added softball, volleyball, flag football, golf, and ski/snowboarding.

Presidential Awards Given to Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf

Nancy O'Brien was the chairperson of the 50th anniversary event. It took place at Ramada Inn in downtown Salt Lake City on September 27, 1997. A banquet was held where five Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf sportsman awards were given. A Presidential Award was given to Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf by Utah Association for the Deaf in recognition as the sports club's 50 years, still standing. The award was received by UACD secretary Nancy O'Brien.

In 2002, UACD women's basketball team won the President's Award, given by the Utah Association for the Deaf, for their outstanding performance at the USA Deaf Basketball (USADB) National Basketball Tournament in Indianapolis, Indiana. This was the first time a women's team from Utah had participated in the national basketball

tournament (UAD Bulletin, May 2002). Andrea Anderson, a basketball player, accepted the award on behalf of the UACD women's basketball team (UAD Bulletin, September 2002).

President Justin Anderson of Utah Athletic Club of the Deaf Shared a Vision

My vision is to keep the legacy of strong and rich history of Utah Athletic to carry on and pass the traditions and success to the new leaders and athletes.

We want to keep the name of the oldest active Deaf athletic club in the USA.

We want to have a strong amateur sport organization for the Deaf people, especially for the youth.

In conclusion, the UACD has contributed far more than just sport competitions. It has brought athletes together not only for the enjoyment of maintaining fitness, but also to meet and interact with Deaf peers. Deaf sports have played an important role for Deaf people in a Deaf cultural aspect.



Justin Anderson

Note

Gary L. Leavitt, personal communication, 1995.

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