

ALMA RICHARDS ATTRACTS NOTICE

"I told you so" way at the Congratulations of his teammates.

"Mike" Murphy, the trainer, also grinned and said in regard to Richards's victory: "Just plain old American grit, that's all."

Shipmate of Iron County Athlete Tells About Victory at Stockholm.

When Alma Richards of Parowan, Utah, the Cornell freshman, attached to the Illinois Athletic club, competes at the M. A. C. relay carnival, March 14, St. Louis will see one of the greatest natural athletes that ever lived, says a writer in the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. Richards is the holder of the Olympic record of 6 feet 4 inches, made at Stockholm in 1912, where he defeated such high jumpers as George Horine, the holder of the world's record of 6 feet 7 inches; Egon Erickson of the Mott Haven Athletic club of New York, and Liesch, the great German jumper.

Richards shows nothing in his jumping outside of an amazing power to jump. He clears the bar in an awkward fashion, with little of the "lay out" of the trained athlete. Previous to 1912 Richards knew nothing of jumping. He is 6 feet 3 inches in his socks and weighs 200 pounds—some heft to hurl over 6 feet 4 inches with the consistency he does.

In June, 1912, the students of Bingham University, the preparatory department of which he was attending, made up a purse to send him to the Olympic games tryouts at Chicago. He came unheralded. The writer was an "also jumped" competitor in the high jump event on that occasion, and caught sight of a big, raw-boned lad with his knees wrapped with rubber bandages. (Richards afterwards told me that he threw his knees out of joint in a wrestling match with a town bully on the streets of Provo, Utah, when but a lad of 16.) He wore a sky blue shirt with a great white "Y" on it, which I mistook for a misconception on the wearer's part for the emblem of Old Eli or Yazoo (Miss.) high school.

Scoffers Are Shown.

Richards, however, indignantly informed me that the big "Y" stood for Brigham Young university, and asked in surprise, "Never heard of the best U. in Utah?"

Needless to say the college and club men in competition, when they lamped his "form" over the easy heights, ejaculated, "Well of all—Say! who let him in?" But they changed their tune when Richards refused to be shaken off, finally "copping" at 6 feet 1 inch, and saying, "Fudge, I thought you guys could jump."

Even then he had a hard time convincing the selectors of the team in Chicago that his performance was not a fluke. Coach Stagg of Chicago university stood pat for the big Utah boy, however, and he was finally chosen to represent the Stars and Stripes in Sweden.

The writer was a stateroom mate of Richards on the sojourn of the Finland. I had lots of respect for the big one, but I didn't think he could cope with such champions as Horine, Erickson and Grumpelt.

Richards kept declaring that 6 feet 4 inches would win the Olympic crown. Most people admitted this height would win, but they couldn't see what Richards was driving at.

Finally one athlete said: "Well, where do you come in, even if 6 feet 4 does win? You never did that height." It happened to be in the daily poker game on the trip across the Atlantic, and the speaker had just bet a "half."
Calls the Smart One.

Richards's eyes gleamed.

"No; smarty, I never jumped 6 feet 4, but I will, and I'll just raise you a bone, too."

It was up to the big one to do "six four," but he never seemed afraid of being branded a first-class "piker" by his teammates. On the day of the high jump—preliminaries Richards managed to fall over 6 feet 2 by the "width of a mosquito's whisker" and qualify for the finals the following day.

In the finals he missed every height twice from 5 feet 8 inches to 6 feet 3 inches, but each time cleared the bar with his heart in his mouth on the third trial.

Liesch, the great German, was the athlete in the best "form" that day, clearing every height up to 6 feet 3 inches on the first trial, although he appeared to extend himself on the last height. He didn't appear to be through, though, and Richards knew that the only way to beat the German was to scare him.

At the height of 6 feet 4 inches Richards approached the bar with blood in his eyes on his first trial. Gathering his lumbering body he hurled himself over the height with space to spare. Richards afterward said that the jump took all he ever had. The German didn't know it, however, and the apparent ease of the effort beat him. He approached the bar hesitatingly and the clapping of the crowd frustrated him. He was beat after three nervous, faltering trials. Richards just grinned in that