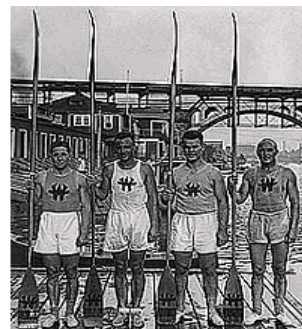


Havens Olympic History

On the waters of the Potomac River in the early 1920's, two brothers spent long hours paddling wooden canoes within sight of the Washington Monument. Bill Havens Sr. and his younger brother Charles "Bud" Havens were members of the Washington Canoe Club which was established in 1904 on the banks of the Potomac and is arguably the birthplace of American Olympic canoeing and kayaking.

In 1924, paddling was accepted as a demonstration sport in the VIII Olympiad in Paris, France. In 1923, Bill Havens Sr. was undefeated and untied in paddling competition and considered the favorite to win gold in Paris. Both Bill and Bud made the US Olympic Team which also boasted such Olympic notables as rowers John B. "Jack" Kelly Sr., James Rockefeller, and Benjamin Spock (of Dr. Spock fame) and swimmers Duke Kahanamoku and Johnny Weissmuller. While training, Bill Havens Sr. learned that his wife was expecting their second child around the time of Games. He made the decision to give up his place on the Olympic Team to stay home with his wife for the birth of his son. John F. Larcombe took Bill's place on the team and, with Bud Havens and the other members of the US Team, boarded the USS America for the nine day voyage to France. While the US Team competed, Bill Havens Sr. waited by his wife's side and received the news that his younger brother Bud had won gold in three events. Four days after the completion of the paddling events, Bill's son Frank was born.



Charles "Bud" Havens, 2nd from right



Bill Havens Jr.

Over the next two decades, Bill's sons, Bill Jr. and Frank became two of the top paddlers in the country. In 1936, at the age of 16, Bill Jr. finished third at the US Olympic Trials just missing a place on the US Team. At the World's Fair in New York City in 1939, Bill Jr. won the 1,500m K1 race setting a new World Record. A year later, in 1940, Bill Jr. won three national championship titles and was named to the US Team but the Games scheduled for Tokyo were cancelled due to World War II. Bill Jr. was again named to the 1944 Olympic Team scheduled for London and again cancelled by the ongoing war.

In 1948, both Bill Jr. and Frank made the US Team for the XIV Olympiad in London. Both brothers borrowed canoes from the Czechoslovakians for their respective C1 races. Bill Jr. finished 5th in the 1000m race and Frank, in the over 1 hr 10,000m race, finished second to Frantisek Capek of Czechoslovakia by 34 seconds bringing home a silver medal for the United States.

Following the 1948 Olympics, Bill Jr. and Frank set as their goal winning the two man 10,000m race at the upcoming 1952 Olympics in Helsinki. To achieve their goal, the brothers followed an intense training regimen and, having bested the world record in training, were favored to win the gold. However, fate denied Bill Jr. the almost sure chance to make the 1952 US Team and the opportunity to win an Olympic gold medal. In a freak accident, he severed the tendons in his hand helping one of his fellow teachers free her car which was stuck in snow. Frank went without his brother Bill Jr. to Helsinki, Finland to compete in the 1952 Olympic Games.



1948 US Olympic Team. Bill Havens Jr. (2nd from right) & Frank Havens (3rd from right)



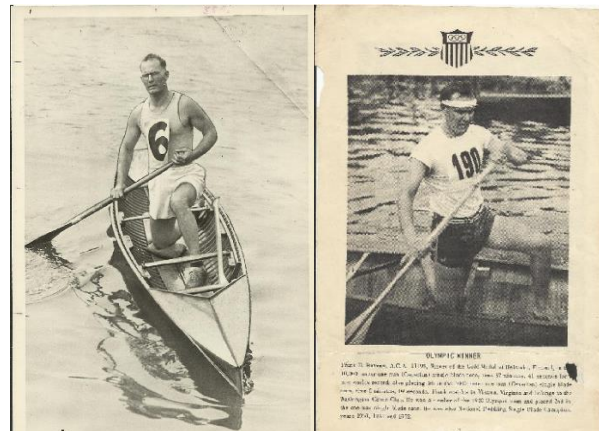
Frank Havens (bow) & Bill Havens Jr.

When Frank left the United States for the 1952 Olympics he took with him three paddles. During practice, Frank broke one and stress-fractured the other two. The US Team's only other paddles were too short for Frank. In desperation, he went to the Canadian coach, Doc Whitall and asked if he had any extra paddles. Doc was a friend of Frank whom he met at the 1948 London games. Frank recalls "Doc gave me a 72 inch long beast of a paddle used for steering war canoes. I used a 68 inch but trained with that beast for 10 days." Frank finally went back to Doc and told him this paddle was too heavy and awkward. The Canadian canoeing team coach then loaned him his own personal paddle to use.

In his book "100 Greatest Moments in Olympic History" Emmy Award winning film maker Bud Greenspan writes about Bill Havens Sr.'s decision in 1924 to give up his spot on the Olympic Team to remain home to witness the birth of his son, Frank. "It would take almost three decades before he realized he made the correct decision," wrote Greenspan, "for in the summer of 1952 he received a telegram from Helsinki, Finland, the scene of the Olympics. The telegram read:

"Dear Dad, thanks for waiting around for me to get born in 1924. I'm coming home with the gold medal you should have won.' It was signed, 'Your loving son, Frank.' Frank Havens had just won the gold medal in the singles 10,000 meters canoeing event. "

Frank had used Doc's borrowed paddle to not only win the gold medal but also set the World Record. When he tried to return the paddle, Doc said "You keep it. You earned it." Many years later, when Frank heard about the construction of a Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough, Ontario, he offered to return the paddle to Canada. It is on display there, with the story of



Bill Havens Sr. 1924 (left) & Frank Havens 1952 (right)

how a Canadian Olympic coach, in the true spirit of Olympic international camaraderie, helped an American canoeist fulfill his father's dream and win a Gold Medal in the Olympics <http://canoemuseum.wordpress.com/2012/07/31/olympic-fever-24-2/>.

Bud Greenspan, known for his moving Olympic documentaries, lists the story of Bill Havens Sr.'s 1924 decision to forego the Olympics and his son's victory in 1952 as one of the greatest moments in Olympic history and documented it in his film <http://www.americancanoe.org/?HavensAward>. NBA basketball great, Olympic gold medalist, and former U.S. Senator Bill Bradley considers Havens' story one of his favorite Olympic moments proclaiming "Bill Havens is an American hero."

"These men represented the very best of our country during an extraordinary era in Olympic sport" says Olympic gold medalist and former US Olympic Committee COO Norm Bellingham "They personified the Olympic ideals as they pursued the highest levels of sporting excellence with dignity, honor, and humility. They set the standard for future generations."

Frank Havens went on to compete in two more Olympics, 1956 in Melbourne and 1960 in Rome, and remains the only American to win a gold medal in a singles canoeing event. Subsequent generations of the Havens family continue to participate in numerous paddling disciplines, winning multiple National Championships in both flatwater and whitewater events, and hold leadership positions in canoeing and kayaking clubs, committees, and national paddlesport organizations.

Bill Havens Sr. (1897-1976). 1924 Paris Olympics; relinquished his seat on the team.

Charles "Bud" Havens (1903 – 1935). 1924 Paris Olympics: One Person Canoe Double Blade - Gold, Two Person Canoe Double Blade - Gold, Four Person Canoe Double Blade - Gold, Four Person Canoe Single Blade - Silver.

Bill Havens Jr. (1919 -2013). 1940 Tokyo Olympics – cancelled; 1944 London Olympics-cancelled; 1948 London Olympics, C1 1Kilometer - 5th)

Frank Havens (1924 -). 1948 London Olympics C1 10Kilometer - Silver; 1952 Helsinki Olympics C1 10Kilometer - Gold, C1 1Kilometer - 4th; 1956 Melbourne Olympics C1 10Kilometer - 8th; 1960 Rome Olympics.



Frank Havens (left) and Bill Havens Jr. (right). 1987.

For information on the Havens family Olympic History contact Kirk Havens (540-907-4460 ext 111)