

● If you think birling is an easy game, if you think it's child's play to stand on a half-submerged pine log, churning in the water, then think again. You're going to slip, stumble, trip and fall, landing face down in an icy pond while some wisecracking spectator yells—



YOU'RE ALL WET!

By JOSEPH W. LaBINE

Chips aren't flying so fast these days from the axes of north woods lumberjacks. Between strokes you'll find them talking about a sport called birling (log-rolling to you) and the world championship birling contest to be held at Escanaba, Mich., August 12 to 14.

Nothing is easier than falling off a log. Nor is anything harder than standing on one, especially when it's half submerged in a pond of water and somebody else is on the other end, trying to push you off.

Here's a nimble-footed art that makes toe dancing look like an old man's game. It's strange, surely, that log rollers can be seasoned lumberjacks, big-boned men with heavy shoes who should be more at home on dry land than tripping the light fantastic on a slippery log.

Part of the Job.

But they aren't birlers by choice. Lumberjacks discovered long ago that to keep your job in the north woods you've got to have a knack for this apparently senseless business.

In the days when legendary Paul Bunyan was a youngster in knee trousers, lumberjacks first rolled their logs into the river and nursed them downstream to the sawmill. Usually the drive went smoothly, the churning waters carrying millions of feet of timber down to the doorway of civilization. But now and then some obstruction would cause the logs to pile up and it was the birlers' job to skip out under the face of this menacing jam, find the key log, jerk it loose and get back to dry land before he was crushed to death.

With a roar like the collapse of a 10-story building, the jam would loosen itself and go thundering downstream. If the birlers were skilled—and lucky—he would skip over the swaying carpet and get out of danger; if luck or skill failed, he might meet a horrible death between crushing, splintering logs.

Smart lumberjacks soon discovered that it was pretty good life insurance to practice log rolling in their spare time. When the day's labors were finished or the logs had been delivered to the mill, they

found a postman's holiday in competing with one another to determine who was "the best man on the log."

Annual Summer Event.

That was the start of competitive birling, a sport that is at once toe-tripping and red-blooded. In a land where the heyday of lumbering has long since disappeared, a few enthusiasts have kept birling alive, gathering annually from the far-flung outposts of their primitive north woods to vie for the championship. There are veterans who remember the invincible Tom Fleming and Al Hubbard who reached their peak in 1898. They remember Big Joe Madwayosh, the husky Indian woodsman who won the title in 1924. They still watch Wilbur Marx, the child prodigy of yesteryears who tossed "Big Joe" into the pond when a boy of 14 summers.

But they cannot believe that birling has become a college boys' sport. So they'll converge at Escanaba from every north woods settlement this year to watch some real lumberjack defeat Joe Connor, the twenty-six-year-old University of Minnesota student who won the crown last year.

Considering its barrel-chested heritage, birling should not be a college boys' sport. But the modern birling match finds veteran rivermen struggling to retain their



RIGHT: Joe Connor, the 1937 world champion birling, shown at work on the spinning timber as he prepares for this year's tournament at Escanaba, Mich. BELOW: A remarkable picture of birling feet, where a man must step faster and higher than in toe dancing if he doesn't want to get wet!



laurels against lads who never worked on a log drive, who never pulled the key log from a jam. The practical side of birling is foreign to younger rollers but they know the rules of the game which is all that concerns the judges.

The Battle Begins.

And modern birling does have definite rules. A round, smooth and perfectly turned white pine log, 13½ feet long, and measuring all the way from 16 to 18 inches in diameter, is put in the water. Two men wearing light calked shoes mount the log, one at each end.

Then comes the battle, a tempestuous warfare of churning pine in which each man, by spinning and snubbing the tricky log, tries to throw the other into the water. With bewildering speed the timber whirls and stops, then starts the other way. From the river bank spectators see an exhibition of perfect balance, timing and muscular co-ordination. But eventually one man topples and splashes into the creek. As in wrestling, two falls out of three constitute a match.

Birling has flourished since the nineties without the aid of a promoter. But it was not until the lumbermen's exposition at Omaha in 1898 that it became organized as an annual national event. That was the year Tom Fleming defeated Al Hubbard in the final match. In 1900, 1901 and 1902 the tourney was held at Ashland, Wis., after which it was abandoned. In 1914 William P. Hart, Wisconsin sportsman, revived it at Eau Claire.

Birling's Child Prodigy.

Big Joe Madwayosh won his first crown in 1924 and on the sidelines that year was thirteen-year-old Wilbur Marx who decided birling looked easy. He came back the next year to provide the tournament sensation by almost defeating "Big Joe," racing him off the log after 21½ minutes of breathless birling in the second round.

When the next year's tournament opened Marx was again present, merely fifteen years old, but now a well-muscled, seasoned athlete instead of an awkward boy. Losing a third round elimination match in the northwest titular tourney steadied him and he won the Wisconsin state title without difficulty. Twenty-six of the most accomplished log cuffers in the game were entered for the world's title and young Marx defeated four of them in swift succession, winning his way through the first, second and third rounds of elimination and the semi-finals.

Then he faced little Billy Girard of Gladstone, Mich., in the final match. Too eager, too confident, he made the mistake of thinking himself speedier than Girard and "Little Billy" raced him off the log for straight falls in the fastest match that has ever been rolled. Feet trod so fast they could hardly be seen; spiked shoes chewed the logs to slivers; "white water" splashed the contestants' legs and both birlers were almost continually on the verge of a wetting.

On to Victory.

But Marx was a steadier birling the next year and he could not be stopped. At sixteen he won the world's championship against a score of veteran log rollers. He held it 10 years.

But last year the college boy from Minnesota came along and Marx, whom the old time lumberjacks had at last taken to their hearts, lost his title. To what depths has this sport fallen!

This year Marx says he'll regain the championship and the bearded birlers from the northwoods are wishing a real jam-breaking logger would appear to teach all these young upstarts a lesson. But Joe Connor, the college boy, has been spending the summer at a CCC camp making his legs tough and preparing to take on all comers.

Maybe Joe Connor will be defeated, but even then the plaid-shirted lumberjacks won't be completely happy. At last year's Escanaba tournament they rubbed their eyes with amazement and chagrin to see four girl birlers engage in a contest of their own. A few old timers admitted the women showed a speed and style that equalled or surpassed the skill shown by a lot of the semi-finalists in the men's tourney.

Their only consolation, it appeared, was in the memory of Paul Bunyan, patron saint of all log rollers. Paul's wife, the story goes, was the only one able to wet him in a birling match!

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Floyd Gibbons'

ADVENTURERS' CLUB

HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!



"Mad Week-End"

By FLOYD GIBBONS
Famous Headline Hunter

HELLO EVERYBODY:

Talk about being in a tough spot. Here's just about the toughest one I ever heard of. Suzanne Mathias of New York City contributes this tale to the column and becomes a Distinguished Adventurer on the strength of it.

As far as Suzanne is concerned, the only redeeming feature of this experience is that a number of other people shared it with her. It was down in Miami in December, 1929. A crowd of Suzanne's friends had clubbed together and chartered a boat for a week-end fishing trip. It was an old boat of the cabin cruiser type with plenty of bunks in it, and the party sailed at midnight on the captain's assurance that, by morning, he'd have them at a spot where there'd be plenty of good fishing.

When they awoke next morning they were out of sight of land.

The only thing that showed on the horizon was a small island that looked as if it might be one of the Florida Keys. Suzanne asked the captain where they were, and he told her they were about 90 miles from Miami, but he didn't say in what direction.

His Captain Was Crazy.

And shortly after that, things began to happen. "The first inkling we had that anything was wrong," Suzanne says, "came from my mother who was chaperoning the trip. She came up and asked us what we knew about the captain. She had been talking to him, she said, when suddenly he began raving—saying that his son was 'The High Priest of the Temple,' and that his father was the right hand man to the king of Sweden. A couple of us decided to investigate, and started a casual conversation with the captain. After talking with him a few minutes we were left in no doubt. He was CRAZY AS A LOON!"

That didn't look so good. Ninety miles out at sea—out of sight of land—and totally at the mercy of a crazy boat captain. The whole crowd agreed that the best thing to do was to put back in to Miami. But the captain didn't agree with them. He flatly refused to move the boat, and said a few things more, too. He told them that not one of them knew



The captain appeared with a gun in his hand.

a thing about navigation and couldn't run the boat by themselves—that they didn't even know where they were—and what was more, he was in absolute authority while at sea and not even the President could tell him what to do with his ship.

They tried to cajole him, but that didn't work. The men started to threaten him, but he walked away, and five minutes later appeared in the companionway with a gun in his hand. After that, nobody cared to argue with the skipper.

Planned to Kill All of Them.

The day wore on slowly. No one fished, for every one was too scared to fish. The captain's raving didn't make them feel any better, either. He had suddenly got the idea in his head that the whole crowd was just a bunch of sinners and that he'd be taken straight to heaven if he killed them all then and there.

The night was even worse. None of the crowd could sleep. They huddled together in one of the cabins while the captain prowled about the boat. Early in the evening they found he had let out the fresh water supply—that they had nothing to drink. There was a little ice in the refrigerator and they melted that. What they were going to do when it was gone, they didn't know.

Still the mad captain prowled restlessly about the boat. Late that night one of the men saw him slinking along the deck, a flashlight in one hand and a heavy wrench in the other. He followed him below. The skipper crept into a dark cabin, walked noiselessly to one of the bunks, raising the wrench high in the air and brought it down with crushing force on the pillow. Then he turned on the light, looked at the bed, and grunted his disappointment when he saw there was no one in it.

The man who had followed him went back to the main cabin and told what he had seen. By that time, half of the company were ill. One girl was having hysterics, another had developed a nervous hicough, and Suzanne, who had acquired a bad case of sunburn during the day, was down with chills and fever. Toward dawn, the hysterical girl quieted down, and they sat in silence to await the rising of the sun.

Lord Told Him to Go Back to Miami.

Daylight made them feel a little better—but what would the day bring? About eight o'clock the engine started chugging. What did that mean? Were they going back to Miami? Or was the mad captain taking them still farther out to sea? One of the men ran up to the bridge to find out. He came back with good news. "The Lord told me not to bother with you," the captain had said. "He'll take care of you himself. We're going back to Miami."

They reached port early that evening, and reported what had happened, to officials at the dock. The officials weren't especially surprised, for another boatman had already noticed the skipper acting queerly and had told them about it. If the boat hadn't come in that night, they said, they were going to send a coast guard cutter out to look for it.

Outside a little hysterical reaction, Suzanne says, everyone in the crowd was all right. Suzanne hasn't been out in a boat since, she claims, although she might be induced to ride on a ferry boat sometime, if she could have the captain examined by an alienist before she started.

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Extending an Olive Branch

"I once taught school," said Uncle Eben, "jes long enough to realize dat when you are extendin' an olive branch you want to select one dat kin be used de same as a birch rod."

King Spoke No English

George I spoke no English. Because of this and the fact that he took little interest in his kingdom, the government was virtually in the hands of his ministers, notably Sir Robert Walpole.

A City for 2,600 Years

Rome, Italy, has been a city for 2,600 years. The city that stands on the "seven hills" is the acme of a dozen other Romes that reached their zenith of glory and then faded, leaving beautiful monuments to emphasize their departed splendor.

Pounds in Tons

The English ton is 2,240 pounds avoirdupois, the United States (short) ton is 2,000 pounds and the French tonne is 1,000 kilograms (2,204.6 pounds).

Inscription on N. Y. Postoffice

"Not snow, nor rain, nor heat, nor gloom of night stays these couriers from the swift completion of their appointed rounds," is one of the inscriptions on the main postoffice in New York city. It is adapted from Herodotus.

Favorite Fruit in Jamaica

The favorite fruit in Jamaica, British West Indies, is called an "ugli." It is a cross between a grapefruit and a tangerine, combining the virtues of each.

Hyrax Related to Elephant

The hyrax is related to the elephant and the hippopotamus in structure but not in size. In appearance it resembles a guinea pig. The fur is brown. Its feet resemble those of an elephant and it has minute tusks.

The Isle of Orchids

Jamaica is frequently called "the Isle of Orchids," because of the gorgeous blooms of this flower that may be seen growing wild throughout the colony.

Linens Go Mexican In Interesting Motifs



Pattern 6085.

Let these motifs help you to go gayly Mexican. Mainly in easy outline and single stitch! Pattern 6085 contains a transfer pattern of 2 motifs 4¼ by 5¼ inches; 2 motifs 4¼ by 4¼ inches; 2 motifs 3¾ by 5¼ inches; 30 inches of 4¼ inch border and 6 motifs ¾ by 1¼ inches; color schemes; illustrations of stitches; materials needed.

To obtain this pattern, send 15 cents in stamps or coins (coins preferred) to The Sewing Circle, Household Arts Dept., 259 W. 14th St., New York City.

Please write your name, address and pattern number plainly.

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONS

More Meringue.—A teaspoon of cold water added to the white of an egg before beating will give a double quantity of meringue.

Keep Peas From Burning.—If a slice of bread is put in the kettle when making pea soup the peas will not sink to the bottom and burn.

Don't Wrap Ice.—It is poor economy to save ice by wrapping it in heavy paper or cloth; such a covering insulates the ice from the rest of the refrigerator.

Removing Ink Spots.—A paste made of starch and buttermilk spread over an ink spot on a rug will remove the spot. Let the paste remain on until it is dry, then rub it off.

Salt Removes Odor.—To remove clinging fish odors from your hands, wash them in water to which salt has been added.

Send for This Free Bulletin on KEEPING COOL with food

YOUR family will be far more comfortable during the next few weeks if you send for "Keeping Cool with Food," offered free by C. Houston Goudias. It lists "cooling" and "heating" foods, outlines the principles of planning a healthful summer diet, and is complete with menu suggestions. Just put your name and address on a post card, ask for "Keeping Cool with Food," and send it to C. Houston Goudias, 6 East 39th Street, New York City.

How Women in Their 40's Can Attract Men

Here's good advice for a woman during her change (usually from 35 to 42), who fears she'll lose her appeal to men, who worries about hot flashes, loss of pep, dizzy spells, upset nerves and moody spells. Get more fresh air, 8 hrs. sleep and if you need a good general system tonic take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, made especially for women. It helps Nature build up physical resistance, thus helps give more vivacity to enjoy life and assist calming jittery nerves and disturbing symptoms that often accompany change of life. WELL WORTH TRYING!

Available Capital
Politeness and civility are the best capital ever invested in business.—P. T. Barnum.



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MOTHERS, ATTENTION! If your child has WORMS, the best remedy to drive them out is Dr. Peery's "Dead Shot" Vermifuge. Good for grown-ups also. 50c a bottle at druggists or Wright's Pill Co., 100 Gold St., New York, N. Y.