

The CHAMP

... A Moving Story of how the Australian people rallied to help Dave Sands' family ...

AUSTRALIA'S great triple Champion, Dave Sands, beloved by his own Australian people, and admired and respected by many thousands of other people throughout the world, has fought his last fight and has gone on into the Eternal Hereafter to meet the last Great Referee, leaving a proud and honoured record . . . and an empty place in many hearts.

Like the honest easy-going sportsman he was, Dave never failed to help a needy friend, and in so doing prejudiced his worldly wealth to such a degree that his untimely death found his wife and young children with a lot of debts and no money.

But the true Australian sportsman's love of Dave Sands did not end with his death, and within a few days moves were afoot to ensure the future and security of his family.

The foremost of those who rallied to this great cause was well-known radio sporting Editor, Reg Grundy, of Station 2SM.

Reg knew Dave personally, had described all his fights at Sydney Stadium, had interviewed him on a number of occasions and had taken him to quite a number of Charity shows. When Dave's death was announced Reg and Geoff Gardiner of *Sports Novels* formed a committee, together with jockey Neville Selwood and Sydney Nightclub owner Joe Taylor, for the purpose of raising funds for Dave's family. Here we let Reg tell the story:

"We approached Sydney Stadium and received permission to use the Stadium for a Benefit Boxing Night (this was staged several weeks ago and netted just over £350) and several other smaller shows were mooted. But I realised that if we were to raise "Big" money, something more than this would have to be done. I discussed the problem with 2SM's General Manager, Bernie Stapleton, and he offered me the use of Station 2SM on Saturday night, 30th August, for a six hour appeal.

This Appeal was going on 'cold'—that is, without prior publicity—but we had practically no time in which to thoroughly organise it.

The Staff of 2SM offered to help, but we knew this was not enough, for many helpers would be needed to man all the phones we knew would run "hot" that night.



Vic Patrick

However, a few short announcements over the air and we were inundated with offers to help. There were offers of help from people in almost every walk of life and gradually the appeal started to show signs of being a success.

As it was an appeal for funds to help the wife and children of a great Australian sportsman, it was only natural that some of the biggest figures in sport should appear on the programme. They did. We had Keith Miller, Vic Patrick, Bill Henneberry (referee, Sydney Stadium); Tom Powell (Bookmaker and regular ringsider); George Barnes (leading contender for the Australian and Welter-weight Title); Alf Gallagher (fought Sands twice); Alf Vockler, Jim Mitchell (American Negro Wrestler); Teddy Doon, Neville Sellwood, Athol Mulley, Chief Little Wolf, Herb McHugh (Manager, Leichhardt Stadium); Wally O'Connell (Manly-Warringah Rugby League Captain); Rugby League Referees, Jack O'Brien and George Bishop; Joe Taylor (Club Celebrity Boss and regular ringsider) and Jack Coyne.

It was a sizzling six-hour programme packed with interest and enthusiasm.

Keith Miller offered to try to break Don Bradman's record score of 452 runs, with the public contributing £1 per run, £5 for a boundary and £10 for a six. Miller beat Bradman's record with over 100 runs to spare.

Ted Doon asked as his fee for winning an imaginary Derby—£200 (the money, of course, to be put into the fund). He won the race in a canter.



Keith Miller