

## **MARS PHOTOGRAPHER'S ASSIGNMENT: UNDER WATER DOWN UNDER**

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**MEMO:** Darlene White Natale is a free-lance writer.

Bill Sauers of Mars will soon be on his way to the 2000 Olympics in Sydney, Australia.

At 40, Sauers doesn't look the part of an Olympian. That's because he was selected for his prowess in photography, not athletics. Sauers, proprietor of a Mars photo studio, was picked by ASPN.com (All Sports Photography Network) and Kodak to shoot Olympic water polo events.

Sauers' road to the Olympics was circuitous. In 1995 he was hired to shoot the Lemieux-Barasso Celebrity golf event. The tournament has grown into the Mellon-Mario Lemieux Celebrity Invitational, featuring such famous people like Michael Jordan, Wayne Gretzky, John Elway and Michael Keaton.

Sauers had always shot portraits at the tournament using a traditional Hasselblad large-format camera for years. But this year, with the increased number of foursomes and the rapid turnaround needed, he decided to go digital.

Being a traditional photographer, Sauers was skeptical about digital quality until he visited ASPN in Cranberry. He quickly learned that with the right equipment, the electronic photos could be as crisp and clear as traditional film photos.

He invested in digital equipment and enrolled in Kodak-sponsored training at ASPN.

Sauers had to compete for the plum Olympics assignment against a class of digital photo trainees. His work was selected, and he's on his way to the Olympics with ASPN President Jim Fitzgerald.

"This is a highlight of my career. I am truly honored to have this opportunity," Sauers said.

When Sauers was 14, he won the Kodak International Snapshot Award. The award-winning photo is simple: a friend drinking from a fountain with a dog snagging a gulp from the overflow. The photo still hangs in Mars Area Middle School.

Sauers and ASPN.com also offer specialized photo services for youth sports. They shoot events, and families can buy photos through the Web site.