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Olympic swimming hero strikes gold for second time

By Richard Miles

DAVID WILKIE made a big splash in sport when he carried away an Olympic gold medal for swimming in the 1970s. Yesterday he triumphed in the commercial world when he sold his health-care business for £8 million.

"I wanted to be a success in water and on land — now I have," said Mr Wilkie as he unveiled details of the sale of Health Perception, the natural remedy firm he founded in 1989 after he blew the whistle on his swimming career.

Mr Wilkie, 50 last month,

said the sale of the company was as satisfying as taking the gold medal in the 200 metre breast-stroke in 1976. "A gold medal is probably worth £8 million today," he said.

Health Perception, which Mr Wilkie runs with his wife, Helen Isacson, has been sold for cash and shares to William Ransom & Son, a manufacturer of natural remedies with roots that can be traced back to a Quaker family of the 1840s.

Mr Wilkie has agreed to stay on for at least two years. Over the past decade he has build up a portfolio of reme-

di- dies based on plant extracts, which are now marketed in chemists and supermarket chains such as J Sainsbury.

The most important product is Glucosamine, a treatment for easing the pain of rheumatoid arthritis. Health Perception also produces Omega Plus, a treatment based on primrose oil and fish oil, and Cognito Energy, which it claims aids brain function. Mr Wilkie said the market for Glucosamine was growing at close to 30 per cent each year and was now worth £50 million. Health Perception has a 40 per cent market share.