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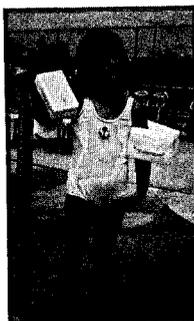
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PROFESSIONAL MARATHON SWIMMING

BY: JOE GROSSMAN, Secretary, WPMSF
World Professional Marathon
Swimming Federation

Marathon swimmers of the modern era complain — and with reason — that the rewards for the practice of their art are microscopic measured on the scale accepted in today's sports-crazy world.

While agreeing wholeheartedly, one can only offer solace in comparison of today's rewards with those of a century or more ago. Finding myself marooned in a large capital city whose library contained microfilmed copies of the *Times* of London dating back to 1790, I found a few examples of the manner in which long-distance swimming was treated — both in terms of publicity and prizes — in those "dear, dead days beyond recall."

Here, in its entirety, is the first item I happened upon, printed — without so much as a headline to make it stand out in a column of dry-land trivia — dated May 19, 1791:

"Tuesday afternoon three men, for a wager of eight guineas, swam from Westminster to London Bridge. The victor was carried on the shoulders of porters to a public house in the Borough, where he drank such a quantity of gin that he expired in about half an hour after his victory."

Even the death of the winner of this early match race on the Thames wasn't deemed sufficient reason to publish his name! Another anonymous swimmer, who lived to tell of his effort, made the *Times* on September 24, 1805.

"On Thursday last, a soldier in the Guards stationed at Deal undertook for a trifling wager to swim from opposite the Barracks at Deal to Ramsgate, a distance of eight miles, the sea at that time being very much agitated by the weather. To the astonishment of a number of the assemblage of spectators, he performed at what appeared easy to himself, though every wave seemed to bury him from sight of the shore."

Sometime between 1805 and 1810 the "Guess Who?" era of swimming reporting ended. The *Times*, on September 7, 1810, reported:

"Last week, for a wager of 10 guineas, Ednund Austice, Esq., of His Majesty's Ship Cossack, undertook to swim from Plymouth Sound to the Victualling Office Point, which he performed in 20 minutes, to the great astonishment of all the spectators assembled on the occasion."

Having reached the point where names and times are noted, the same paper, on May 30, 1811, had this to report:

"Two young men of the names of Gregory and Waller undertook on Monday evening to swim for a wager of 10 guineas from Brentford towards London, with the tide, who should go furthest in three hours. Gregory got away from his adversary in a short time and continued to swim down the River, where he was taken up in a boat; but Waller suddenly disappeared after having gone three miles and his body has not yet been found."

Under a headline "EXTRAORDINARY SWIMMING," an August 11 report from Gibraltar appeared in the September 7, 1821, *London Times*.

"Mr. James Graham, a gentleman belonging to the garrison, undertook on the 8th inst. to swim from Waterport Wharf to Algeciras, and to the astonishment of everybody, reached to within a musket-shot of that town in the space of four hours and a quarter, when he got into one of the boats by which he was followed, complaining of nothing but excessive thirst. The distance in a straight line is about five miles and a half; but as Mr. Graham was forced out of it by the current almost every time that he lost sight of the house he was steering to by swimming on his back, it is supposed that he may have swam altogether about eight miles. The feats of Leander, and of a noble poet of the present day, is boy's play to this."

The latter sentence was a snide reference to the 1½-mile Hellespont swim, in 1810, of British poet Lord Byron, who had become somewhat of a bore on that subject. In the August 7, 1822, issue of the *Times* the following account was published under a headline "FEAT IN SWIMMING":

"Liverpool — On Saturday afternoon last, about five o'clock and about the time of high water, Mr. Claude of this town swam across the Mersey, from George's Pier to Woodside, a distance of nearly a mile, in 23 minutes. He immediately returned across the River and reached the Old Quay Pier, a similar distance, in 40 minutes, being the first instance known of any person accomplishing such a task. He swam again from the shore with the intention

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of dressing himself in a boat in the middle of the River; but finding himself sufficiently vigorous, he proceeded a third time across the River, and actually landed at Seacombe Point, a distance of considerably more than a mile, in 46 minutes, after having been immersed in the water nearly two hours. On returning to Liverpool in a boat, he assisted in rowing."

Obviously things have changed for the better. As a result of the world-wide interest in the 1875 swim across the English Channel by Capt. Matthew Webb, marathon feats of swimming are now accorded complete and accurate coverage. One may be certain that when the annual 18-mile race from Capri to Naples takes place (unfortunately too late in July for inclusion in this column) the full names of finishers and their times will be noted in the newspapers.

RIJNDERS, PETROVA, GYARMATI SET MARKS

HANNOVER, West Germany, Apr. 19 — In an international match pitting Russia, West Germany, Netherlands, Hungary, Great Britain and Sweden against each other, April 18-19, European records were set in four events.

The Dutch women who improve with every passing meet, set a European standard in the 400 meter (1c) medley relay as the quartet of Groen, Te Riet, Rijnders and Brigitha were timed in 4:30.0. This clipped one-tenth of a second off the old mark held by the East Germans. Anke Rijnders took away another East German European-held mark when she clocked 2:07.2 to win the 200 m. freestyle, a full second faster than Gabriele Wetzko's time. Her teammate, Annemarie Groen, was judged second to Hungary's Andrea Gyarmati in the 200 m. backstroke, but both girls were given the European record. Groen's time was 2:24.33 and Gyarmati 2:24.31. Russia's Nina Petrova stroked her way to the 200 m. individual medley record with a 2:26.9 and again it was a pair of East German girls who lost the European standard, Wetzko and Guntert (2:27.5).

Dutch national marks were set by Alie Te Riet, women's 100 m. breaststroke, 1:17.4 as she finished fourth behind Agnes Kaczander, Hun., 1:16.7, Janette Petterson, Swe., 1:17.3 and Christine Jarvis, 1:17.4. In the men's competition, Roger van Hamburg, Neth., set a national mark of 2:16.6 for 200 m. individual medley, though he could do no better than an eighth place finish. His teammate, Arnold Rood, a sixth place finisher in the 200 fly, set a national mark of 2:12.5.

Enith Brigitha, Neth., won the 100 m. free in 59.6 with East Germany's Jutta Weber and Russia's Tatjana Solonitzkaja both at 1:01.1 with the German girl winning the silver by a jd.

Andrea Gyarmati won the 100 m. backstroke with Miss Groen a close second, 1:07.8 to 1:08.1 with another Dutch girl third, Marianne Vermaat 1:08.4.

Miss Kaczander won her second gold medal, as she swam a solid 2:43.8 for the 200 m. breaststroke. Miss Te Riet, 2:45.2 and Poroebaiko, USSR, 2:45.5 followed in order.

Heike Nagel, WG, won the 100 and 200 m. fly, 1:05.1 and 2:27.1 respectively. Miss Rijnders, 1:06.2 and Judith Turoczy, Hun., 1:06.6 were runnersup in the 100 while Jancie Machin, GB, 2:28.0 and Trudy Jansen, Neth., 2:31.3 trailed in the 200.

In the 400 IM, Biroete Oesjkoeraitite, USSR, and Nina Petrova went 1-2, 5:16.8 and 5:18.1 respectively.

Igor Grevenikov, USSR, won the 100 m. free, 53.4 with Bure, USSR, 53.4 and Schiller, WG, 53.7 finishing in that order. Grevenikov also won the 100 m. back, 1:00.8 trailed by Laszlo Cseh, Hun., 1:00.8 and Colin Cunningham, GB, 1:00.9. Cunningham came back to win the 200 back. He returned 2:11.8 with Bob Schoutsen, Neth., 2:12.7 and Verraszto, Hun, 2:13.2.

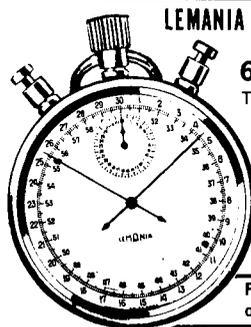
Nikolai Pankin, USSR, had an easy time of it in winning the 100 and 200 m. breaststrokes. His 1:06.1 placed him well ahead of Britain's O'Connell, 1:07.8 and West Germany's Klees, 1:08.1 In the 200 m. event, Pankin was timed in 2:27.5 with O'Connell 2:30.3 and Kosinsky, USSR, third, 2:30.9.

Lutz Stoklasa, WG, outouched the Soviet, Sharygin and Szentirmay, Hun., 57.8 to 58.0 for the two runnersup. Sharygin revenged his loss in the 200 fly, clocking 2:07.4 to West German's Meeuw, 2:07.9 and Brinkley, GB, 2:09.8.

Other results: MEN — 200 m. free, Brian Brinkley, 1:57.2; Alexander Samsanov, USSR, 1:57.7; Klaus Steinback, WG, 1:58.4. 400 m. free, Samsanov, 4:11.4; Brinkley, 4:11.4; Andras Hargitay, Hun., 4:14.0. 1500 m. free, Rene van der Kuil, Neth., 16:47.1; Lisetzki, USSR, 16:54.4; Rosenkranz, WG, 16:56.2. 200 IM, Hargitay, 2:10.8; Sucharev, USSR, 2:11.6; Partika, USSR, 2:13.3. 400 IM, Hargitay, 4:43.3; Sucharev, 4:45.9; Terrell, GB, 4:46.0.

Final point score: Russia 464; West Germany 398; Netherlands 378.5; Hungary 350.5; Great Britain 344 and Sweden 241.

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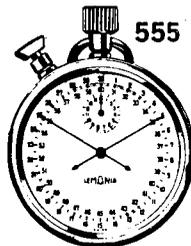
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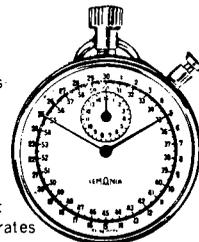
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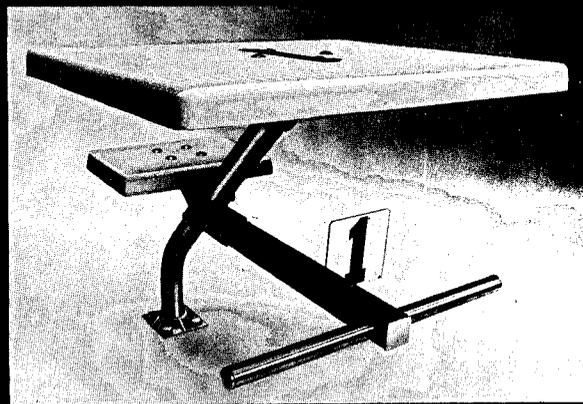
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