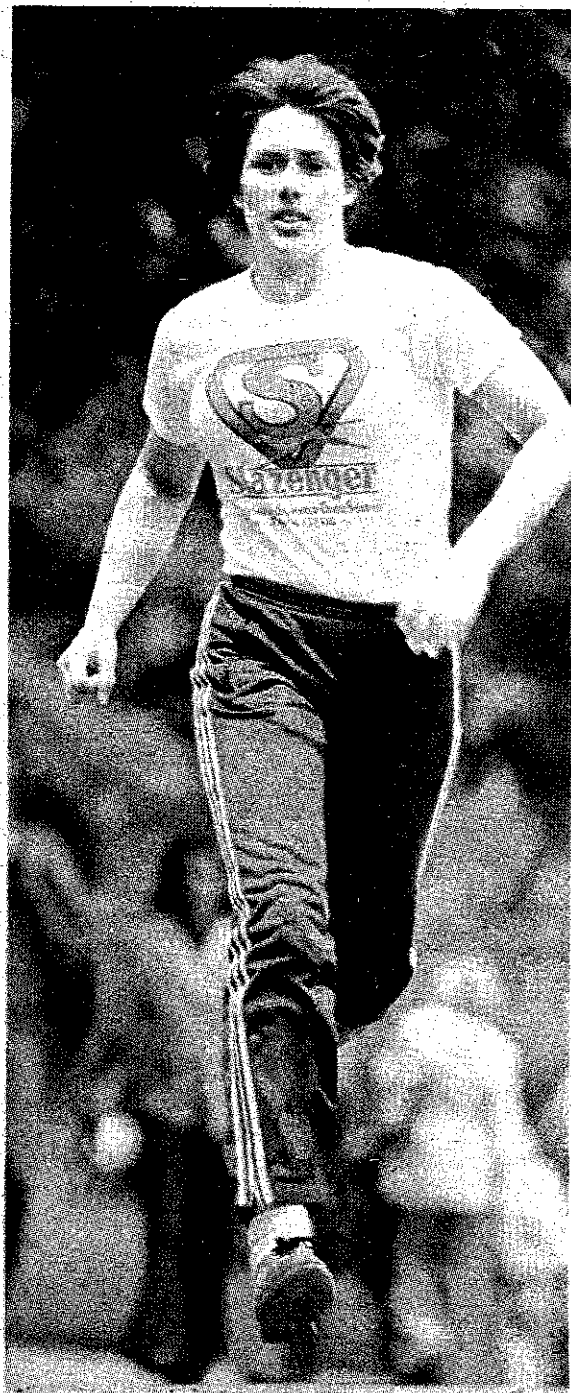
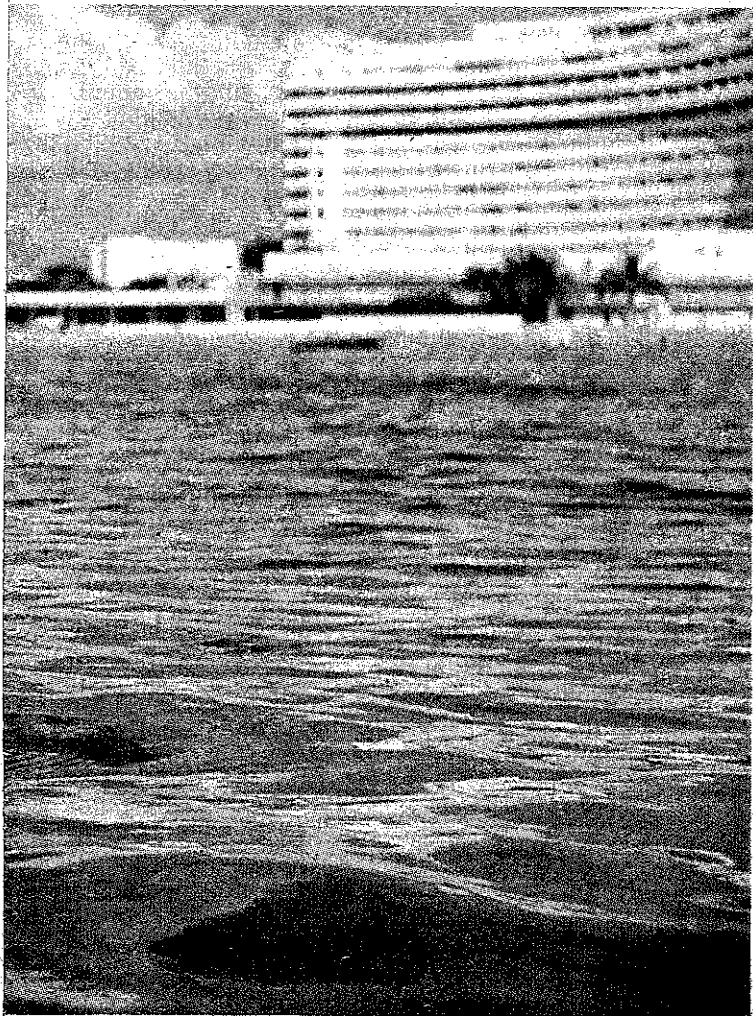


WILL DEFY PAIN AND -MILE SWIM



The Human Fish who admits: I'm so scared

Miami Beach's luxury hotels provide the background as Diana Nyad surges through the water. The 29-year-old swimming machine has set herself a torrid schedule to prepare for her marathon swim from Cuba to Florida, set for July 24. But the many months of training have taken their toll on her nerves: "Everything I touch I think it's an alligator," she says.



Flashback: Diana circles Manhattan Island in one of her greatest triumphs.

training regimen of weight work and 10-mile runs to just swimming — up to 12 hours a day.

And she has moved to Miami Beach in Florida for better ocean conditions.

She cancelled one planned 56-mile swim around the island of Barbados in the Caribbean after marine biologists convinced her it would be suicide without a shark cage.

Since the end of April, Diana has lived like a recluse, locking herself away from visitors when she is not training. She doesn't even have a phone in her hotel room.

"She has to concentrate on the big

swim now," her friend and spokeswoman, Marcie Rudell, told THE STAR.

"She is physically prepared for it, but she has to get herself mentally prepared as well. She wants to concentrate on nothing else."

Apart from a choppy sea, which will make swimming difficult, sharks also pose a problem.

To safeguard against them, one of her sponsors, Colgate, is donating a \$43,000, 40-foot shark cage surrounded by steel bars and chain link fencing.

It will sit in a double-hulled vessel like a catamaran and will seat four

The Human Fish trains on land, too. Her schedule includes 10-mile runs.

people who can watch the swimmer.

It is now being constructed at boatyards in Florida and Westchester, N.Y.

Diana freely admits that after years of swimming for her own satisfaction, she wants this to be her last adventure.

And she wants to make money from it.

"The Cuba swim has tremendous commercial potential," she said.

"It will be big enough to keep me on the talk show circuit for a year. And I'm good enough at other things to catch on from there."

Diana has an autobiography coming out in September from Random House, and she is ranked 13th nationally in women's squash, a sport she took up only four years ago.

She believes she may have a future as a sportscaster and also in commercials.

Diana has been a keen swimmer since she was 12. And despite suffering heart trouble at 15, she just missed making the 1968 Olympic team in the 100-meter backstroke.

She switched to long-distance swimming in 1970, and made a name for herself as a water daredevil.

She says she doesn't particularly like the grueling, repetitious grind of her sport, but loves doing it just to challenge unreasonable physical strain.

THE STAR JULY 4, 1978 25

The Star July 4, 1978