

PROFESSIONAL MARATHON SWIMMING

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

Two former World Champions and two newcomers are battling for the male and female titles of World Champion Marathon Swimmers of 1971, respectively, with the competitions boiling down to one August race — the 25-mile crossing of Lake St. John at Roberval, Que.

Egyptian Abdel Latif Abou-Heif, who won the crown in 1964, 1965 and 1968; and Argentinian Horacio Iglesias, the 1967 and 1969 title-holder, are separated by a few points for the men's championship after five of the six sanctioned races, with Abou-Heif holding the slight edge.

Shadia El Ragab of Egypt and America's Diana Nyad are in the same situation in the women's division, with Miss El Ragab leading by an even smaller margin. The Egyptian mermaid is making her professional swimming debut this year, while Miss Nyad was the 1970 winner of the Greta Andersen Trophy given annually to the women's "rookie of the year."

The 18th annual Capri-to-Naples race on July 11 was won by Yugoslavian newcomer Rogosic Veljko, who completed the 18-mile course in 7:43.51. He was followed by Mexico's former Olympian Guillermo Echeverria (winner of the 26-mile Guaymas race in May) in 7:50.33, with Iglesias in third position in 7:53.51. Miss El Ragab was women's winner in 11:42.39.

In the first of the North American races — the 9th annual 28-mile Saguenay River event at Chicoutimi, Que. — Iglesias was the winner in 8:38.50 with Abou-Heif close behind, finishing in 8:42.20. Miss Nyad was women's winner in 8:46.00.

The 7th annual 24-hour team race at La Tuque, Que., was won by the team of Iglesias and current men's World Champion Johan Schans of Holland. They completed 176 laps — 57.3 miles — between them in the 24 hours. Abou-Heif and Syrian Marwan Saleh were second, completing 168 laps — 54.7 miles. Miss Nyad, teamed with

Canadian Gaston Pare, was the first woman finisher. She and her partner covered 167 laps — 54.3 miles — finishing third overall.

Plans for a 15-mile race on the Chicago lakefront were postponed until next summer by the sponsoring city of Chicago and the committee seeking to stage a fourth Rhode Island race cancelled its plans. This left only one possibility for a U.S. marathon swimming race this summer — a committee in North Carolina seeking to stage a river race before the end of September.

Under World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation regulations, World Championship points scored by finishers in four of six sanctioned races will be totaled to determine the 1971 champions. Should an additional sanctioned race be added to the schedule, each swimmer will still total his four highest scores.

As July ended, Abou-Heif was the only one among 42 male and six female swimmers who have participated in international championship races this year to have finished every one. In the sanctioned events, he had amassed points for three second places, one seventh and one ninth-place tie. Iglesias, who had participated in only three of the five races, had two firsts and one third place. Points are awarded for finishing positions, finishing times and course distances. Miss El Ragab and Miss Nyad had each scored in two sanctioned races.

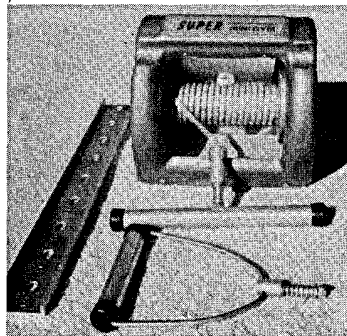
'WHERE ARE THEY NOW'

North Hollywood, Calif. — High school coaches — be sure your All American swimmers are included in our "Where Are They Now" feature scheduled to appear in the October issue.

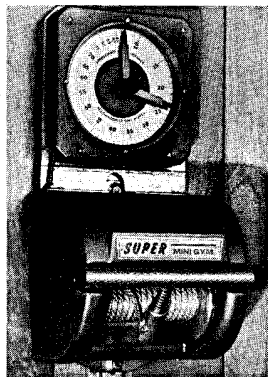
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