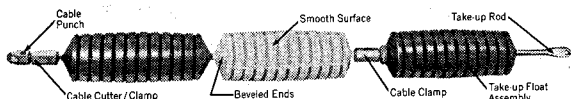


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PROFESSIONAL MARATHON SWIMMING

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

Big-time professional marathon swimming will return to Chicago in August when the City of Chicago conducts a Lake Michigan race for prizes totaling some \$12,000. It will be the first pro endurance swimming race held in the Windy City since 1963, when Egypt's Abdel Latif Abou-Heif won a 60-mile cross-lake competition.

Final details had not been settled as this column was written, but Chicago's Director of Special Events, Col. Jack Reilly, informed the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation that a race will be held on the weekend of August 21-22. Plans call for a 10-mile race with a \$5,000 first prize.

Chicago has several legitimate claims to being the home of marathon swimming in the United States. The annual three-mile amateur races on the Chicago River — two of which were won by Johnny Weissmuller — helped develop some of the fine natators who turned professional when Chicago's chewing gum king, William Wrigley, Jr., boosted the "channel swimming" sport into the big time in 1927 with a \$25,000 race in the Catalina Channel and a \$30,000 race on Lake Ontario at Toronto later that same year.

During the Century of Progress years, Chicago was the site of a 15-mile open race in 1933, and the following August, on the day John Dillinger was shot in the same city, a men's 15-miler and a women's 5-miler were held on the world's fair waterfront. Marvin Nelson of Ft. Dodge, Iowa, won both years.

In 1959 the first of the Jim Moran Lake Michigan races was held, a 36.7-mile swim from Chicago to Michigan City, Ind. There were no finishers in the first two runnings, but in 1961, Chicago's Ted Erikson won the third annual event. In 1962, Moran offered a \$10,000 prize for the winner of a 50-mile race from Chicago to Kenosha, Wisc., which was taken by Greta Andersen of Los Alamitos, Calif. The last Moran race was a 60-miler, from Chicago to Benton Harbor, Mich., in 1963, won by Abou-Heif of Egypt, who took home a \$15,000 prize.

That was the last professional marathon race held in Chicago. However, a number of Windy City endurance swimmers have developed, in the tradition of Chicago's legendary Norman Ross, in recent years. Erikson holds the speed record for the round-trip crossing of the English Channel — 30 hours and three minutes, set in 1965. His son, Jon, in 1969 became the youngest man to swim across the Dover Straits, at the age of 14 years, 11 months. Dennis Matuch of Chicago has been among the top 10 swimmers in the international rankings for the past five years. Up-and-coming endurance swimmers from Chicago include Michael Paesler, who was 15th in the world ratings in 1970, his first year as a pro.

The return of international marathon swimming races to Chicago is welcomed by the swimming world!

Two races held this spring in the United Arab Republic
(Continued on Page 26)

MUNSTER SOPHS CRACK 70 MILE MARK

Munster, Ind. — Thirteen sophomores of the Munster High School swim team swam their annual sophomore relay, equal in number of miles to the year they graduate, in 32 hours, 30 minutes, 19.8 seconds.

The 70th mile time serves as the record, since each class swims one mile further (in this case 73 miles). This year's team clocked 30 hours, 40 minutes and no seconds to set the record.

Each swimmer goes one mile at a time and the relay continues until the class president swims the last mile of the marathon. The school and community are behind the swim and coach Jon Jepsen says the marathon helps build school spirit and togetherness among the relay members who will be swimming together for the next two years.

THE MASTERS CORNER

By CPT. Ransom J. Arthur, M.D.

I have received a number of letters from individuals all over the country who participated in the Amarillo meet. They uniformly speak of the enjoyment they had and their pleasure at getting back to the challenge of competition again. I think the Meet was still small enough to provide a homey atmosphere and that increased the zest of participation. In the future everything will be much larger and most efficient and more competitive. I hope we can retain some air of informality, however, in spite of constant growth.

Masters swimmers in California and elsewhere are preparing at this time for the upcoming meets. Jim Montrella is holding a 200 meter Masters freestyle event at his annual Lakewood Aquatic Club Invitational Meet and, of course, the Senior Sports International will take place in the Los Angeles Swim Stadium. The Senior Sports International program has been greatly expanded and they anticipate having more than 600 participants in all the events, which include not only track and field and swimming but also archery and bicycle races, etc. They have divided the age groups into 5-year segments and perhaps this will be a model for our future National Masters Swimming competition.

Buck Dawson, John Spannuth and I are working on plans for a possible First Annual National Masters Long Course championships to be held early in January at the International Swimming Hall of Fame at Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. I hope that we will be able to arrange this meet which will then inaugurate a twice a year championships program. Current plans call for seeking of AAU approval in October, a National Long Course Meet at Ft. Lauderdale in January, and the National Short Course Masters Championships in Amarillo again in May 1972. In subsequent years we will very likely rotate the various championships around the country in response to bids for them. It would be great if we could follow the pattern of the open national meets, in the East one year, the Midwest the next, and Southwest next, the Pacific Coast the next, for example. I think that should be entirely possible but we are not quite ready to formalize it.

I wish I had space to praise every individual Masters swimmer because all of them participated in spite of the obstacles of job, family, and civic responsibilities as well as many of the infirmities of joint problems, muscle pulls, and so forth which plague the older athlete. I would like to write a word or two in behalf of Walter Pfeiffer, however. Because of the age groupings this year which everyone in age group 45 and over in one category, it handicapped those over 50. I thought Walter did a remarkable job both in the Pacific Coast Regional Meet and the National Meet as well. For example he swam the 50 yard butterfly in 0:39.2, the 100 yard individual medley in 1:15.9, the 100 yard breaststroke in 1:21.3, and the 200 yard breaststroke in 3:04.5. I consider these really remarkable times for a man of 57. He has also mastered the dolphin kick in the butterfly so he is able to swim it with good grace and form which is a no mean feat for someone who grew up with the frog kick in the butterfly stroke. I can say from personal experience this is not an easy transition to make. I am sure that with his enthusiasm and determination he will be participating with us for many years in the future.

PRO MARATHON (Continued from Page 24)

were won by Egyptian swimmers making their debuts in international pro competition. Hani Hemmat won the 20-mile Aswan race in 7:22.53, with Syrian Mohammad Khamis second. Competitors from England and Hungary were among the 10 finishers.

Marawan Ghazawi won the 18-mile Nile River race in 6:02.02, with Hemmat second. World Champion Johan Schans of Holland was sixth and America's Stella Taylor of Florida was 18th in that race.



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