

PROFESSIONAL MARATHON SWIMMING

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

Horacio Iglesias of Argentina has jumped into the lead in the quest for the men's title of World Champion Marathon Swimmer for 1972 with a second place in the 19th annual race from Capri to Naples in Italy and a victory — teamed with Holland's Johan Schans — in the 24-hour race at La Tuque, Quebec.

Iglesias, already a three-time winner of the world crown, is hoping to win the honor for the second consecutive year — a feat which has not been accomplished since Egypt's Abdel Latif Abou-Heif won the title in both 1964 and 1965.

Neck-and-neck for the women's championship crown are reigning title-holder Shadia El Rageb of Egypt, women's winner in the Capri-Naples event, and Diana Nyad of the United States, who was the first (and only) female finisher in the gruelling La Tuque marathon.

At Capri, only four of the eight professionals who toed the starting line managed to finish within the 12-hour time limit. Rogosic Veljko of Yugoslavia, who also won the Italian race in 1971, was first home in 7:32.50. Iglesias followed in 7:44.35. Syria's Marwan Saleh was third in 8:42.35, and Miss El Rageb was the last finisher, in 11:18.57.

During the race Miss Gizella Gebhardt of Hungary was disqualified by officials. Although the Egyptian-run International Long Distance Swimming Federation, which conducts the event, did not

announce any reason, WPMSF observers reported she was allegedly towed by a boat during the race.

(In the ILDSF-conducted Capri-Naples race, amateur swimmers and professionals swim together and, although the overall finish results are announced together, ILDSF reports show the amateur winner — in record time — was Magdi Mandour of Egypt, in 7:42.07.)

In the annual La Tuque competition, the team of Iglesias and Schans completed 179 laps — 58.3 miles — equalling their 1970 record for the event. The Argentine-Dutch duo, which also won at La Tuque last year, became the first team ever to win the race three years in succession. For Iglesias, it was the sixth consecutive time he had been on the winning team in the 24-hour event.

American Jon Erikson and Mexican partner Oscar Villegas were second, covering 171 laps; Marwan Shedid of Egypt and Jan Van Scheyndel of Holland were third with 170 circuits, and Miss Nyad, teamed with Dennis Matuch, were fourth, completing 166 laps. Miss Nyad and Matuch also won the award for being the first of the 14 teams finishing on which both swimmers were from the same country.

Still on the marathoning menu for 1972 are the 28-mile Saguenay River race from Bagotville to Chicoutimi, Que., which this year will also be a team event; and the 18th annual crossing of Lac St. Jean, a 25-mile race ending at Roberval, Que. **The widely-heralded race planned for Lake Michigan in late August has been cancelled by its sponsors, the City of Chicago. Plans are still afoot for September and October races in Syria and Lebanon.**

Three solos of note have already been recorded this year. Perry Cameron, New Zealand amateur, became the first ever to swim across Cook Strait from the South to the North Island. He covered the 20-mile stretch in 9:36. American pro Walter Poenisch of Grove City, Ohio, swam 94 miles up the Florida coast from Marathon to a point east of Miami in 21 hours, in a shark cage — which proved a worthwhile precaution.

And 15-year-old Lynne Cox of Los Alamitos, Calif., swam the English Channel, from England to France — "the hard way" — in the fantastic time of 9:57, thus establishing a new speed record for that direction for both men and women.

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