

DISTANCE SWIMMING

By Dennis Matuch



At last a book about marathon swimming has been published. And its a good one. What Jim Counsilman has done for swimming in general Conrad Wennerberg has done for marathon swimming in particular. His book, "Wind, Waves and Sunburn" (A.S. Barnes, \$10) is not only a history of the sport but an intelligent guide to training. It is lavishly illustrated with over 70 photographs plus maps of the great marathon swims of today and the past. The book is jammed-packed with information culled from the author's files (said to be the largest in the world) and his personal experiences as a coach of professional marathon swimmers for over 20 years (among his charges were Ted Erikson and Dennis Matuch). What makes the book of double interest is the thoroughness of treatment and its narrative style. Before describing the great swimming feats of man, the author tells us of the studies of those intrepid scientists, the zoogeographers. They study the movements of animals over the surface of the earth. Did you know that tigers have been known to swim as far as 14 miles between islands in the Malaysian Straits? Or that elephants have been spotted 25 miles off the coast of Africa? Or that bats have been known to swim one-half block when downed in water? Then there is the champion nonaquatic polar bear which has been seen on numerous occasions 80 or more miles from the nearest solid support. There are many more intriguing examples presented before Wennerberg takes up the physiology and psychology of endurance that characterize the marathon swimmer. A summary of the scientific studies that have determined what are the necessary requirements for a marathon swimmer is discussed.

With this solid introduction, Wennerberg then begins the story of marathon swimming with an account of the all-time great swims accomplished by man in history. Captain Webb and his historic conquest of the English Channel in 1871 (he did it breaststroke by the way) lays the ground work for a complete history of channel swimming that covers in detail the non-stop crossing (two ways) of Antonio Abertondo and Ted Erikson. We learn of the great \$25,000 Wrigley Catalina Island swim in 1927 which was won by the indomitable Canadian George Young. Young was only 17 years old when he beat the seasoned Olympic Champion Norman Ross in that swim. The Manhattan Island, Atlantic City, Lake Ontario and the Lake Michigan swims are all here. The Lake Michigan swims established world records for three years in a row. Ted Erikson, Dennis Matuch, Greta Andersen and Abdel La-Tif Abo-Heif earned world recognition in these famous swims. Abo-Heif established the record that still stands today in the third race in Lake Michigan. He swam from Chicago to Benton Harbor, Michigan, a distance of 60 miles. He collected \$15,000 for his efforts. Wennerberg was at all those swims as coach and he gives us a thrilling account of the thrills and agonies that took place.

The ladies will enjoy reading about Greta Andersen and Judith DeNys who have beaten every man they have ever swum against at least once — and that's in a professional race where big money was at stake. We are told marathon swimming is the only sport where women can successfully compete against men.

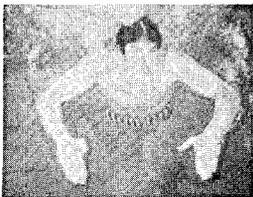
All the pageantry of the current day professional swims is presented also. Lake St. John (25 miles), LaTuque (24-hour team swim), Saguenay River (28 miles) and the European Capri-Naples (25 miles) are described. A complete listing of the winners of these races is given for the first time ever. That's only a sampling. Many more races are described including the South American river swims. Candiotti's famous Parana River swims are here. He once swam over 80 hours in the river.

The book also discusses the practical aspects of marathon swimming. Everyone will be interested in the chapters on diet and drugs. The author tells why faddist diets and drugs will not do you a bit of good. It seems that the second-rate athlete is attracted to such props. The real champions do not bother with either. I guess Wennerberg should know. He has certainly had

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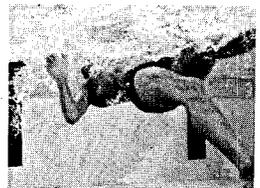
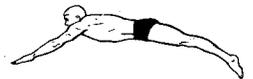
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enough experience in observation of the sport and its competitors.

Finally the reader will learn of the great life and death swims from sinking ships and downed aircraft. Case histories from U.S. Navy and his own records are described in detail. The reader will experience the terror of the victim as he realizes his situation, and empathize with him as he makes his struggle for life in an element familiar to all.

Wennerberg is the kind of man I like — the man who has combined the theoretical aspects of swimming with a solid practical experience. "Wind, Waves and Sunburn" should be in every coach's and swimmer's library for as Wennerberg says, "'Wind, Waves and Sunburn' is more than a book about a sport. It is about an endeavor that affects every living human — swimming. To be able to swim may mean life itself. Not to be able to swim inevitably means death."

SWIMMING HALL OF FAME ELECTS RED CROSS EXECUTIVE AS NEW PRESIDENT

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. — Edmond J. Mongeon, national director of water safety for the American National Red Cross, has been elected president of the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

In the same election Charles E. Silvia, immediate past president and longtime swim coach at Springfield (Mass.) College, was named chairman of the board and Dr. James E. "Doc" Counsilman, head coach at Indiana University was chosen for the newly-created post of founding president.

Swimming immortal Johnny Weissmuller remains as honorary chairman of the board.

Mongeon is a past president of CNCA (Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics) and is a former competitive swim coach from Rhode Island.

Elected vice presidents were: Dr. Harold Henning (Napier, Ill.), president of FINA; Mike Peppe, former Ohio State diving coach and Hall of Fame honoree; Robert Hoffman, Fort Lauderdale-based owner and publisher of Swimming Pool Age and other publications; William A. Prew, Detroit insurance executive who was once the world's fastest swimmer, a former president of the Detroit Athletic Club; and David Robertson, swim coach at New Trier (East) High School, Winnetka, Ill., and secretary-treasurer of NISCA (National Interscholastic Swimming Coaches Association).

Other officers re-elected to the board of the swimshrine were Alice Kempthorne, secretary; Robert Culliver, treasurer; G. Harold Martin, legal counsel and Buck Dawson, executive director.

John duPont was re-elected chairman of the board of trustees, heading a distinguished group that includes the 1972 Democratic Vice Presidential candidate Sargent Shriver and former AAU president John B. Kelly, Jr., brother of Princess Grace of Monaco.

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500 free	5:09.57	5:32.00
100 back	59.32	1:06.75
200 IM	2:08.16	2:22.51
400 M.R.	3:57.37	4:31.00

SATURDAY		
200 fly	2:11.12	2:30.25
100 breast	1:06.22	1:15.25
200 free	1:50.43	2:03.40
400 IM	4:39.48	5:00.44
800 free rel.	7:50.10	8:47.00

SUNDAY		
1650 free	18:14.22	19:00.00
100 free	50.78	57.60
200 back	2:08.70	2:23.88
200 breast	2:25.87	2:41.25
400 free rel.	3:31.39	3:59.93

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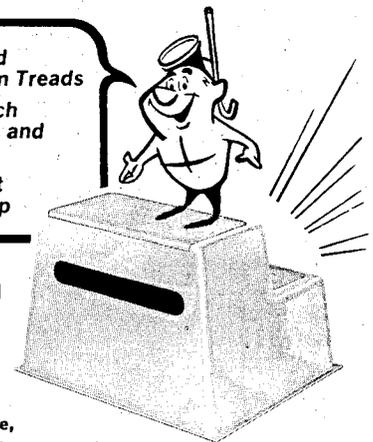
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