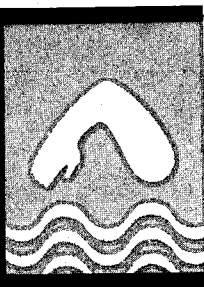


DISTANCE SWIMMING

By Conrad Wennerberg



1974'S TOP MONEY WINNER IN SWIMMING

John Kinsella has become the first American world champion of professional marathon swimming in 40 years. The last American world champion was Marvin Nelson who won both the Chicago Century of Progress and Canadian National Exhibition 15-mile marathons in 1934 (he won both races in 1933 also).

John Kinsella entered five races this summer (his first year on the circuit) and startled sponsors, spectators, news media and fellow swimmers by winning four of the races — three of them in new world record time. Observers of the sport were doubly impressed with John's performance since it is a rare occurrence when an amateur, even of John's stature, does so well in his first year. It is a tribute to John's savvy, his navigators, coach-time-keepers and his superb amateur preparation by Don Watson and Jim Counsilman. They were key factors in his attaining international amateur status. That preparation also proved crucial in John's performance on the professional marathon circuit.

His first swim was the 24-hour LaTuque team swim. It was the ideal pro swim for an amateur to start with. It is held in a small spring-fed lake. It is protected from the winds which means no waves other than those made by the swimmers. The water temperature remains around the 72-degree mark. John teamed up with 20-year-old Sandra Bucha who had collected \$2,000 last year when she placed second in Chicago's 10-mile marathon. It was a wise choice for when the LaTuque marathon was over, the duo had not only beaten the seasoned pros but had bettered the previous record by 14 laps. The 194 laps they swam during the marathon added up to almost 65 miles (each lap is one third of a mile; only one swimmer of a team swims at a time).

During the night, the intermittent effort chilled John a little more than Sandra. When he needed a few extra minutes to warm up Sandra stayed in the water swimming a few extra laps for John. The six extra laps that she swam in the race is a tribute to the remarkable capability of this extraordinary girl. The Stanford University coed's performance on the pro circuit was almost as startling as John's. She is now the female world's champion of professional marathon swimming. Team work is the backbone of LaTuque. John Kinsella and Sandra Bucha showed it.

A week later John stood on the shore of Ha-Ha Bay awaiting the start of the 28-mile Saguenay River Race. One hour and 47 minutes after the start, John pulled himself into his escort boat. Whether it was the leg muscle he pulled at LaTuque or the 59-degree water in the bay (it later warmed up to 70 degrees in the river) that made him leave the water, John doesn't say. The race was won by the 33-year-old European champion Rogosic Veljko in 10:23.37 hours. Veljko had now won two races on the circuit. His Saguenay River win and his fourth consecutive win of the Capri-Naples marathon would certainly place him as the favorite for the next swim — the 20-mile Lake St. John Marathon. John Kinsella had yet to prove himself.

On August 4th, the weather was perfect for the 19-mile Lake St. John race. The water was an ideal 72 degrees and its surface like a mirror. A sprint marks the beginning of the race. It is an arbitrary distance but \$200 is given to the first swimmer to complete it. It serves to give incentive to the swimmers to start out fast. That sprint was an omen of what was to follow. John won it by seconds over Rogosic Veljko.

The two top swimmers, trailed by 20 other pros, continued stroking nineteen more miles before the lake was conquered. John reached the breakwater on the other side of the lake at Roberval where he was only some 12 minutes ahead of Veljko. The breakwater marks the beginning of the end of the Lake St. John marathon. Buoys guide the swimmer up and down two lanes (again an arbitrary distance; this year, about one-half mile) before he reaches the arrival dock.

Fifty thousand cheering spectators greeted John as he began his final sprint. Five hundred dollars went to the swimmer who

had the fastest time for this part of the race. It has been won many times by swimmers who have come in second, third, or even fifth in the main event.

John, showing little fatigue from his almost eight hours of racing, continued stroking strongly. When he reached the finish he had not only won the \$4,000 first prize, \$200 starting sprint, \$500 finishing sprint, but another \$500 for breaking the record across St. John. He had completed the race in a new world record time of 7:54:17 hours. His time was 26:26 minutes faster than the record set the year before by Horacio Iglesias and Ossama Raschad. His total purse came to \$5,200.

Veljko Rogosic of Yugoslavia finished second and Sandra Bucha third. Sandra added an extra \$500 to her purse of \$2,000 for being the first woman across. The first four finishers were well under the previous record.

All doubts about John Kinsella held by the swimmers disappeared with his Lake St. John performance. Horacio Iglesias, disgusted with his poor showing at St. John (fifth) immediately withdrew from the next marathon; a 10-mile event at Laval, Quebec. A few of the lesser swimmers also went home.

The course at Laval was a triangular one set up in a tiny lake in the city's municipal park. The longest leg was 630 feet; the two other legs 345 feet. The 40 laps to be swum in the 85-degree water boded a more than wearing swim. When the race was over John Kinsella had set a new world's record (still pending) for a 10-mile marathon, 3:40:29 hours. He received an extra \$100 for breaking the record. Sandra Bucha made it a double win for the United States by coming in second just 8:33 minutes after John. John Kinsella had eclipsed the previous world record held by Johan Schans of Holland by 18:56 minutes.

Two weeks later came the Chicago 10-mile marathon. Conditions there were a repeat of Lake St. John and Laval: flat and warm (72 degrees) water. If anything, the swim conditions were even better than Laval. Instead of a triangular course, there was a simple half mile long string of buoys set in Lake Michigan just 15 yards from a promenade lake-wall. The site offered an ideal vantage point for the spectators to watch the event. By race day, many more of the top swimmers had scratched. Johan Schans, Claudio Plitt and Rogosic Veljko had gone home.

Thirty-three swimmers started the race. As always there was the flurry to gain the lead at the start. Each swimmer knew he (or she) had to try and stay with John Kinsella. If he could not, he could at least try to limit his lead to as little as possible. Their determination proved itself by the fact that it was one fourth of a mile before John could separate himself from the pack of eight swimmers trying desperately to stay with him.

The pack consisted of Ahmed Amin (U.A.R.), Marwan Saleh (U.A.R.), Marwan Ghazzawi (U.A.R.), Ossama Raschad (U.A.R.), Sandra Bucha (U.S.A.), Jon Erikson (U.S.A.), Raul Villagomez (Mexico) and Magdy Mandour (U.A.R.). At the end of the first mile, John had gained only 50 yards. At the end of the second mile the situation remained unchanged. John was still only 50 yards ahead of the flailing pack. Part of the pack's success up to this time in limiting John's lead was due to Sandra Bucha being part of it. It seemed as if the pack was determined not to let a woman get ahead of them. When John began his third mile the pack, as a unit, began to fall behind.

By the beginning of the sixth mile John had an impressive three-quarter-lead over the tightly knit swimmers. At this point, with fatigue attacking the pack Sandra made her bid to close the gap that separated her from John. She rapidly pulled away from the men. It signaled the disintegration of the pack as it broke up into individual swimmers. From the sixth mile on, there would be no doubt as to John and Sandra finishing one-two. They eventually finished in that order.

A look at John's splits will give you an idea as to how he held up during the race. The struggles that took place for the other nine positions is also evident. The fact that six United Arab Republic swimmers were among the first 11 finishers is evidence of their great professional competitive spirit.

With the \$3,000 Chicago purse added to the rest of his winnings, John's coffers swelled to \$11,750. It was money earned the hard way, but John's performance may be enough to draw even larger purses in the future. There is one point that all the swimmers and promoters agreed on; a man of John Kinsella's ability in swimming coupled with his charm and affability is sure to aid the rest of the swimmers when they seek increased purses next year for all finishing positions.

There remains some doubt among some of the pro swimmers that John has still to prove himself in a cold rough-water swim.

Such top pros as Herman Willemsse, Johan Schans and Horacio Iglesias always had trouble in the cold-water swims. They were rather slender and consequently lost more body heat in such swims. I think John Kinsella's massive build (he is 6-4 and weighs 200 pounds) will enable him to handle the cold water swims when he gains experience in them. His short stroke is also ideal for handling the large waves or short chops. I believe that we have witnessed the beginning of the career of perhaps the greatest professional marathoner yet to be. After decades of foreign domination of pro marathon swimming, the Gordian Knot has been broken. There could be no better representative of what has been called "the toughest sport in the world" than America's John Kinsella.

Below are the results of the 1974 professional marathons. The time for the Capri-Naples Marathon is still pending. Only the first three to five finishers are given.

Mar del Plata (25 miles)		
Horacio Iglesias	12:00 hrs.	\$3,000
Claudio Plitt	12:30	\$2,000
Jon Erikson	13:36	\$1,500

SWIM-A-THON

AN EASY WAY TO MAKE
\$5,000⁰⁰



ALL THE MONEY STAYS IN SWIMMING

FOR INFORMATION AND SUPPLIES WRITE:
SWIM-A-THON
INTERNATIONAL SWIMMING HALL OF FAME
1 HALL OF FAME DR. • FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA

Marwan Shedid	15:21	\$1,000
Oscar Bernatene	15:52	\$ 800
Santa Fe-Coronado ("39-mile" river swim with current)		
Claudio Plitt	7:46 hrs.	\$3,000
Raul Villagomez	7:48	\$2,000
Horacio Iglesias	7:49	\$1,500
Johan Schans	8:01	\$1,000
Jon Erikson	8:17	\$ 800

Capri-Naples (20 miles)

Rogosc Veljko
Claudio Plitt
Marwan Ghazzawi

LaTuque (24-Hour Team Swim)

John Kinsella (94 laps; 7:06 minute average)	194 laps
Sandra Bucha (100 laps; 7:43 minute average)	
Johan Schans (90 laps)	
Claudio Plitt (98 laps)	188
Marwan Ghazzawi (90 laps)	
Magdy Mandour (93 laps)	183
Raul Villagomez (90 laps)	
Jon Erikson (89 laps)	179

Saguenay River (28 miles)

Rogosc Veljko	10:23:37 hrs.	\$4,000
Raul Villagomez	10:50:40	\$3,000
Claudio Plitt	11:14:35	\$2,000
Ossama Raschad	11:41:25	\$1,000
Dennis Matuch	11:44:19	\$ 500

St. John (20 miles)

John Kinsella	7:54:17 hrs.	\$4,000
Rogosc Veljko	8:06:36	\$2,500
Sandra Bucha	8:09:35	\$2,000
Marwan Ghazzawi	8:15:46	\$1,500
Horacio Iglesias	8:28:45	\$1,000

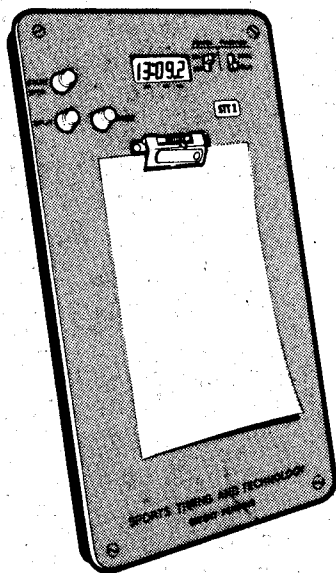
Laval (10 miles)

John Kinsella	3:40:29 hrs.	\$1,000
Sandra Bucha	3:49:04	\$ 800
Marwan Ghazzawi	3:54:17	\$ 700
Claudio Plitt	3:54:21	\$ 600
Rogosc Veljko	3:54:50	\$ 500

Chicago (10 miles)

John Kinsella	3:41:46 hrs.*	\$3,000
Sandra Bucha	3:47:52	\$2,000
Yousef Amin	3:49:08	\$1,500
Marwan Ghazzawi	3:56:30	\$1,000
Maher Saleh	4:02:28	\$ 800
Ossama Raschad	4:06:44	\$ 600
Marwan Saleh	4:06:45	\$ 500
Jon Erikson	4:11:08	\$ 300
Raul Villagomez	4:12:42	\$ 200
Ricardo Carne	4:13:29	\$ 100

*John Kinsella's splits for Chicago Marathon: 20:53 minutes; 21:21; 21:33; 22:02; 22:30; 21:56; 22:21; 22:16; 23:14; 23:49.



The Electronic Timing System

The STT 1 combines all of your timing needs in one compact unit.

Select features include:

- Electronic digital stopwatch with large crystal digits.
- Over 1000 hours operation with standard 9v batteries.
- Memory function which records and displays splits on interval and total time basis without disturbing running time.
- Solid State technology.

All this built into a sturdy clipboard which holds 8½ x 11 paper.

Available in Black, Beige, Blue, Brushed Aluminum

NEW PRICE \$199.50 California residents add 6% sales tax

Manufactured by



Distributed by



HIND-WELLS, INC.

1108 Garden Street
San Luis Obispo, California 93401
Telephone: (805) 544-8555

©1974 Hind-Wells, Inc.