

NEWS *from* WORLD PROFESSIONAL MARATHON SWIMMING FEDERATION, INC.



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SECRETARY

FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT:

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Johnny Weissmuller, International Commissioner of professional marathon swimming, has announced that five races have been sanctioned as international championship events for 1972 by the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation.

On July 9, the 19th annual 18-mile race from Capri to Naples, Italy, will be staged, followed by four North American marathons. The 8th annual 24-hour team race at La Tuque, Quebec, will be conducted on July 22 and 23; the 10th annual 28-mile race on the Saguenay River, from Bagotville to Chicoutimi, Quebec, will take place on July 29, and the 18th annual 25-mile event across Lac St. Jean at Roberval, Quebec, will be held on August 6.

Marathon swimming racing will return to the United States after a two-year absence in late August, when the City of Chicago stages a 15-mile race on Lake Michigan. The new event will be held between August 20 and 27, the exact date to be announced next month.

Weissmuller said all five races will be included in the competition to determine the male and female World Champion marathon swimmers for 1972. Points will be awarded to finishers in all sanctioned races on the bases of finishing positions, finishing times, distances of courses and, in the case of the 24-hour race, the distances covered by each finishing team.

Reigning World Champions Horacio Iglesias of Argentina and Miss Shadia El Rageb of Egypt will defend their titles in this summer's competitions. Also entered in the North American events will be 1970 men's champion, Johan Schans of Holland and seven-time women's champion Judith DeNijs Van Berkel of Holland. Mrs. Van Berkel did not compete in 1971 due to the birth of a baby.

Miss Diana Nyad of Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, runner-up to Miss El Rageb for the 1971 women's title, and Abdel Latif Abou-Heif of Egypt, three-time winner of the men's marathoning crown, have also entered the 1972 races. Miss Nyad is a student at Lake Forest College, Illinois.

America's top-ranked pro marathoner, Dennis Matuch, who was fourth in the 1971 men's world standings, will also be competing in home waters in the Lake Michigan event. The Chicago swimmer, who is coach of the Illinois Institute of Technology swimming team, finished among the top 10 in the international rankings for the past five years.

Lake Michigan has not been the scene of a marathon swimming race since 1963 -- when Abou-Heif won a 60-mile/^{swim}from Chicago to Benton Harbor, Michigan, en route to his first world championship title. The Windy City was the site of annual three-mile amateur races on the Chicago River from 1910 until the waterway became too polluted for swimming in the 1930s. Weissmuller was winner of those events in 1926 and 1927.

During the Chicago World's Fair in both 1933 and 1934, professional 15-mile events were held on the Lake. From 1959, pro races were staged between Chicago and Michigan City for four years, from Chicago to Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 1962, and the 60-mile 1963 race ended that series.

The World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation, headquartered in Washington, D.C., is an organization of 140 professional long-distance swimmers representing 22 nations which sanctions those swimming events conforming to guidelines designed to ensure uniformity and water safety in the sport.