

Rules

You can't conduct a legitimate sporting event without rules. Nyad's crossing had none.

Nyad often says she followed “the rules of the sport.” In her 2015 memoir, *Find a Way*, she says these rules “are such that you may not receive any aid at any time, in either moving forward or in staying afloat” (p. 74).

That's like saying that the law against burglary is such that you may not steal anything with “corn” in its name: Candy corn, corn dogs, cornmeal fritters, etc.

Obviously, that's not the law, though it's an unspoken assumption under the law.

The same goes for Nyad's “rules of the sport.” Here's a summary of the rules of marathon swimming (via the [Channel Swimming Association](#), an English Channel governing body):

1. **No Artificial Aids** beyond a swimsuit, cap, goggles, nose clip, earplugs, and grease.
2. **No physical contact** with the swimmer by any other person.
3. **The observers** time the swim and watch for compliance with the rules.
4. The swimmer must **swim from shore to shore**, starting and ending on dry land.

Everyone on Nyad's crew agreed on the no-touching rule, yet people touched her throughout the crossing. They only enforced the no-touching rule when the media was watching at the end. “It was very important that no one touch me, 'cause you're disqualified,” she said [at a press conference](#) the next day. Her insistence on no touching at the finish was all for show.



Above: Images from Nyad's crossing. Each of the touches pictured — and many others — would have immediately disqualified a swimmer during a legitimate crossing.

Just after Nyad's crossing, [Steven Munatones told Reuters](#) that he would distribute copies of the rules under which Nyad swam. He never did. A 2019 investigation of Nyad's crossing turned up multiple versions of Munatones' rules for crossing the Florida Straits. Nyad has never acknowledged following any of them. (The sets: [FOWSA 1/transcript](#), [FOWSA 2](#), [WOWSA 1](#), [WOWSA 2](#). H/T WOWSA for unearthing the photos and most of these rules during their 2022 [investigation of Nyad's crossing](#).)

NOTE: Other than Munatones, not one of the 40 or so people involved with Nyad's crossing knew anything about the rules of marathon swimming beyond what Nyad told them.

Observers

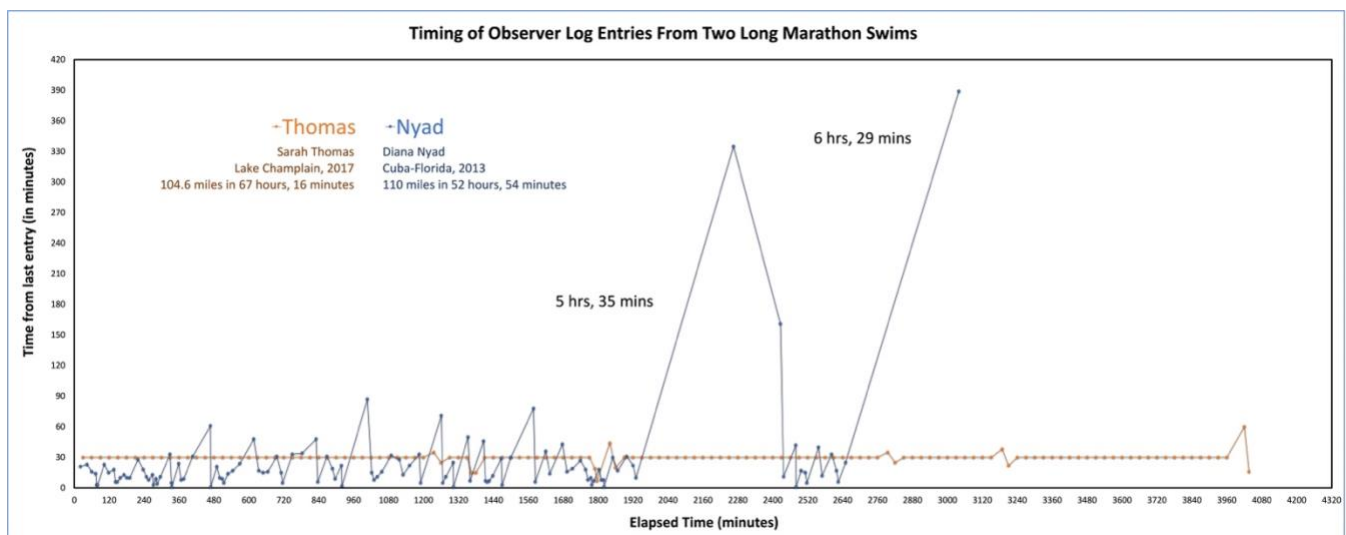
Nyad prided herself on using experts at the top of their fields to help with her crossing: Shark experts, jellyfish experts, current experts, etc. Yet, for observers — the crew members who would attest to her crossing's legitimacy — she recruited two well-meaning but unqualified acquaintances.

For a swim of this importance and length — Nyad and her navigator planned for a 60+ hour crossing — there would typically be at least two experienced observers taking turns on the guide boat to adjudicate the swim.

Nyad originally lined up a single observer: Her good friend and supporter, Steven Munatones. When he proved unavailable, she called two acquaintances. Neither had any training, nor had they ever observed another swim. Ultimately, they produced inadequate logs with hours-long gaps, notably on the final night. (See chart below.)

Why would she put the operation's success or failure in the hands of two neophytes? Because experienced observers would know the rules of the sport. They would hold her to a higher standard she likely couldn't meet.

Compare Nyad's observers to the two on Sarah Thomas's monumental 2019 4-way English Channel crossing: [Suzanne Martin](#), who had already observed more than 10 crossings — including a pair of two-ways; and [Kevin Murphy](#), who had observed at least 16 crossings and had swum the channel 34 times.



Above: After the crossing, Nyad claimed that her observers kept "minute-by-minute" logs for the entire crossing (see *Find a Way*, p. 278). The graph compares the timing of Nyad's observers' entries to Sarah Thomas's observers during [her Lake Champlain swim](#).

Ratification

No marathon swimming governing body has ever legitimately ratified Nyad's crossing.

The day after her crossing, Nyad told a press conference, "I'm sure this swim will be ratified in due time." ([43:50](#), or see [transcript](#)).

By 2019, Nyad's crossing remained unratified, so Munatones decided to ratify it himself by editing Nyad's entry on Openwaterpedia, a marathon swimming wiki. On August 15, 2019, he changed

As of 2019, the swim has not been ratified or authenticated by any official swimming governing body.

to

As of 2019, the swim has not been ratified or authenticated by the Marathon Swimmers Federation, [\[2\]](#) but it has been long recognized since 2 September 2013 by the World Open Water Swimming Association [WOWSA] that wrote the rules of the attempts and provided the onboard observers.

He made this change despite

- having told the [Miami Herald](#) two weeks after the crossing that "Diana's swim was . . . off-the-grid, with no organization regulating it."
- WOWSA had nothing to do with providing the observers.
- Diana Nyad never acknowledged that she followed any version of the rules Steven wrote.

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Because Nyad's swim lacked acceptable rules, observers, and documentation, we will never know what she did in the Florida Straits between August 31 and September 2, 2013.

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BONUS!

50 Years a Liar

Diana Nyad has been demonstrably lying for over five decades. There's no reason to believe she stopped for three days in the summer of 2013.

A few examples of Nyad's many fabrications:

- She claims to have been the [first woman to swim around Manhattan](#), though she was the 7th and knows it.
- She says she swam in [the Olympic Trials](#), though she never qualified.
- She claims that, during the 1970s, she was [the best ocean swimmer on earth](#), though she was never close.
- She tells a [story of a Holocaust survivor](#) who lived through horrific sexual abuse starting when she was 2½ years old. According to a former director of the Dachau Concentration Camp Memorial, Nyad fabricated the whole thing.

We know Nyad lied before and after the crossing. Here are some things she's said about what happened during the crossing:

- "I never of course touched a boat or another person" (Facebook, 6 Sep 2013, since deleted, but see image below).
- "WOWSA has fully sanctioned our swim" (Facebook, [5 Sep 2021](#)).
- "I posted all the data evidence online, along with the minute-by-minute logs from the two independent observers. And then I locked those GPS trackers in a bank vault" ([Find a Way](#), p. 278). The logs had hours-long gaps. Nyad borrowed the trackers and had to return them shortly after the crossing. There is no bank vault.
- "We did not break one rule. Trust me, this dream [is] too important to me to have any slight thing outside the fair, just, ethical and agreed-upon rules of our sport" (Facebook, 6 Sep 2013, since deleted, but see image below).



Diana Nyad · Friends with David Barra and 13 others

Hello, folks...I'm befuddled....breaking what rules? Getting help to get through a current? Have no earthly idea what you're talking about. We did not break one rule. I never of course touched a boat or another person. Swam out in the open sea the entire 53 hours. Nothing breaking the current. I wouldn't even know how to go about doing that. We have submitted two independent overseers comprehensive and accuracy observation notes from the entire crossing. Those will be judged by the auspices of the sport and different record keepers. Trust me, this dream too important to me to have any slight thing outside the fair, just, ethical and agreed-upon rules of our sport. I am an honest, straightforward person. Never been anything but. Every attempt I've made has been by the rule books. And now this successful crossing was done in same fashion. With all due respect, diana.....but, by the way, by all means, ask me direct questions....you will be answered respectfully and with precise accuracy

September 6 at 12:00pm · Like · 🍷 8