



WORLD PROFESSIONAL MARATHON SWIMMING FEDERATION

INC.

ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY • 3040 SOUTH WABASH • CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60616 U.S.A.

DENNIS MATUCH - Secretary
PRESIDENT - Raul Villagomez
Vice President - Marwan Ghazzawi

#25
Volume ² ₅ #2
February 1975

Dear Member:

As you already know we all voted not to swim in any pro race this year unless the minimum purse was met by the sponsor. Enclosed is my column that appeared in the January, 1975 issue of Swimming World magazine which expressed our feelings. Contrary to what some members believe there will actually be MORE pro swims this year rather than fewer. Despite the difficulties with some of the Quebec Swimming Federation sponsors other sponsor-members are going along with our suggestions. Pierre Bourdon (Secretary-Treasurer of the Quebec Federation), a good friend and former marathoner, sent me the planned dates for most of the swims in Canada this year. They are:

LaTuque: July 19-20

Lake St. John: August 3

Saguenay: July 26

Laval: August 10

Claude Gingras (President of the LaTuque 24-Hours) and I have been carrying on correspondence concerning that swim. He says that his colleagues can not make our Federation's suggestion to increase the purse to \$25,000. It seems that all they can offer is \$20,800 for their swim. It appears that we will have to sit down and iron out the difference. Lake St. John and Chicago sponsors have already agreed to our fair rules and suggestions: Those swims that do not meet the standards of our Federation (World Professional standards) should be classed as local or national marathons.

We have had an inquiry by the Three Rivers (Quebec) Exposition. They are hoping to revive their 10-mile pool marathon that was last held ten years ago. That marathon was one of the favorites among pro marathoners. Underwater lighting, TV, grandstands were popular attractions to their exposition. We should have more information about this swim in our next bulletin.

Plans are going ahead for the Chicago 10-mile marathon which will be held on the last Sunday in August.

A committee is working on a 21-mile race in Lake Ontario at Toronto. If the swim comes through it will mark the return of the famous Canadian National Exhibition marathon.

It has been over six weeks since I've heard from Ray Dixon in England. His last word was that the Channel Swimming Association was trying to find sponsors for an English Channel swim to commemorate Captain Matthew Webb's first crossing in 1875.

Enclosed is a brochure for Conrad Wennerberg's book on marathon swimming. The book came out in December. I recommend it highly. If you fill out the order blank and enclose a money order you will receive the book from the publisher in two weeks. ORDER DIRECT FROM PUBLISHER NOT FROM FEDERATION.

WPMSE patches will soon be available. They cost \$2 each. When I have received twenty-five orders I will request the manufacturer to make them up. All members who order will receive them as soon as they become available to me.

LA FEDERATION MONDIALE DES MARATHONS DE NAGE PROFESSIONELLE

FEDERACIÓN MUNDIAL DE MARATÓN DE NATACIÓN PROFESIONAL

DISTANCE SWIMMING

By Dennis Matuch



In 1927, William Wrigley, Jr., the chewing gum magnate, offered \$25,000 to the first person to swim from Catalina Island to the California mainland (19 miles). Wrigley also offered an additional prize of \$15,000 to the first woman to finish, regardless of position. Wrigley's swim received world-wide publicity at the time. He was so pleased that the following year he sponsored the first Canadian National Exhibition marathon swim (21 miles). The winner of that race received \$30,000 for his efforts.

In 1963, Jim Moran, a Chicago auto dealer, put up \$15,000 for the winner of his Lake Michigan Swim. The 60-mile swim got front page treatment in all the local papers and many national and international ones. Television coverage was almost as complete.

Wrigley and Moran, as well as sponsors of other marathon events, were delighted with the "million dollar" publicity they received for a relatively low output. Prize money, however, is only a part of the expense to a pro marathon sponsor for there are also the expenses of organization, publicity and security arrangements.

When the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation officials meet with the sponsors of the 1975 swims in the coming months, they will be stressing how the above sponsors gained maximum publicity by offering large purses. If the sponsors of the 1975 races are convinced, all the swimmers will be competing for substantially increased purses. The officials, on behalf of the swimmers, will be asking that the \$14,000 total purse at LaTuque

sports today are aware of that fact. It remains for the sponsors of pro marathon events to learn.

Today pro marathon races have the potential to blossom into the greatest of sporting events when the public becomes aware of one fact. It is the only sport in which women and men can compete against each other equally on a physical basis. If and when this extraordinary fact is combined with the lure of big money, the coffers of sponsors and swimmers will increase along with the satisfaction of the public.

When is a world champion not a world champion?

One answer to that question is when the champion comes up against a statistician. Shortly after I sent out the latest World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation bulletin to its members, I was hounded, pounded and vilified by a few interested members. The beating I received was harsher than any I experienced in pro swimming. The reason: in the bulletin, the tabulations of the pro swimmers for the season showed that Diana Nyad had beaten out Sandra Bucha for the women's world championship.

I was accused of partiality and dishonesty. How could a swimmer who had two sixths, one tenth, one 14th, one 21st, and one 13th place (Diana Nyad) beat out a swimmer who had one first, two seconds, and a third (Sandra Bucha) for the world's championship?

The answer to that question is in the 1968 bulletin of the Federation. When the late Joe Grossman, the previous secretary, approached a pro-football statistician and asked him to come up with a fair and equitable point system in rating pro marathon swimmers, the statistician came up with the following (adopted by unanimous vote of Federation members):

The WPMF scores finishers in sanctioned races under a point formula devised for the Federation in 1964 and has been in use every year since then. Under this formula, men and women are considered separately but equally. (Thus, if a girl finishes a race in fourth position, she is considered first among the women in that race and the man who finishes behind her, fifth overall, he is considered fourth in the men's division, etc.) Points are awarded as follows: (1) Finishing points — for 1st, 500; 2nd, 350; 3rd, 250; 4th, 150; 5th, 125; 6th, 100; and minus five points for each succeeding place to 25th. (2) Distance points — each finisher receives five points per mile for length of the course. (3) Time Points — each winner's time is considered 100 points and times of all other finishers are scored by subtracting one point for each minute he is

be increased to at least \$25,000 (last year the first place team split \$3,500 which officials do not consider much for a 24-hour grind). Lake St. John, which had a total purse of \$20,000 last year, will also be asked to increase their purse. Laval (10 miles), Saguenay (28 miles) and the Nile River (which offers a ridiculous \$1,000 to the winner of its 23-mile swim) will also be asked to go along with the Federation's proposals. WPMF officials feel that in order for a pro race to be really considered a pro race the last place swimmer (23rd place in some cases) should at least be able to meet expenses for his trip.

There may be some hard bargaining ahead, for the sponsors of pro marathon swims are acute and successful businessmen who, like all successful businessmen, want the most for their money. The uninformed believe that the pro marathon sponsors love the sport and its athletes enough to pay out big money to see them perform. The informed know that this is far from the truth. The prize money offered is only the tip of the iceberg. The LaTuque and Lake St. John sponsors spend close to \$200,000 each to put on their events. This money is spent on publicity, security, boats, medical consultants, advertising and many other incidental expenses.

One does not have to be a businessman to see that there must be a reason for such an outlay. The answer is the 50,000 spectators that attend each event. It is estimated that each fan coming into the area spends at least \$10 during his stay at the event. That's a gross of a half-million dollars for each race. The net, you can be sure, is somewhere between \$200,000 and \$300,000 which is not bad for a one-day event.

Swimmers and Federation officials believe that there is too great a disparity between those figures and their prize money. The swimmers believe that the sponsors can painlessly up the prizes for the swimmers by decreasing that part of their budget now going for promotional work.

Wrigley and Moran knew that by offering excellent purses for their swims, the news media would come to them rather than they having to go to the news media. Money seems to be the common leveler. They knew instinctively that by offering great prizes, you attract all of the public rather than just the athletically-oriented segment. All of the promoters and sponsors of the big money

behind the winner (fractions over 30 seconds considered one minute). (4) Bonus points — a swimmer who establishes a new record for a race receives an additional 100 points (races held for the first time not considered in this category). For 24-hour team races, finishing points are divided among the two members of each team (i.e., each member of winning team receives 250 points, each second-placer 175 points, etc.); instead of distance points, time of race is scored at five points per hour and total divided among both members of each finishing team; and instead of time points, each individual swimmer receives one point for every lap he swims."

In a 1970 bulletin the following addition was made:

"DNF = Did Not Finish. In races which were officially ended at the conclusion of a specified time, swimmers still in competition were credited with the places in which they were swimming at the end of the race. Championship points for finishing positions were awarded those swimmers.

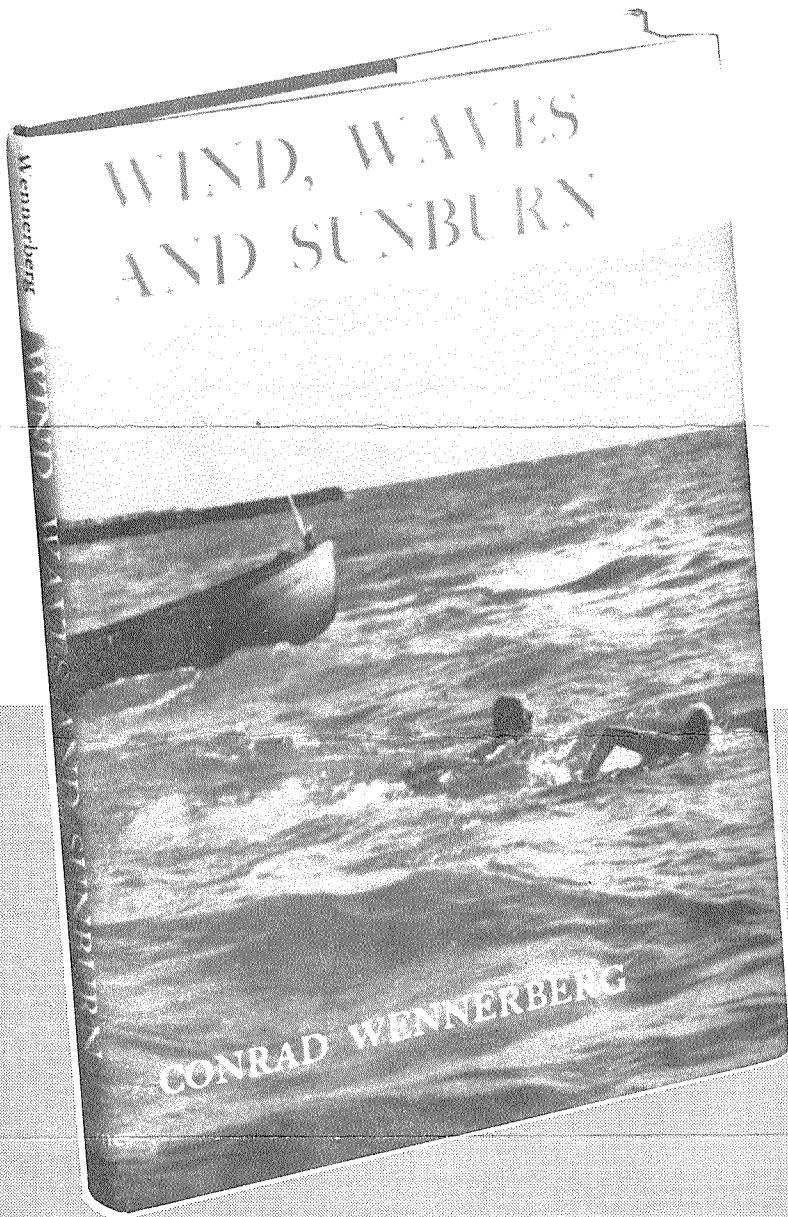
THE 1970 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP STANDINGS — (At the annual WPMF meeting in Hamilton, Ont., it was unanimously voted to select the world champions on the basis of the highest point totals amassed by swimmers in a specified number of sanctioned races each year, that number being one more than half of the number of sanctioned races. In 1970 there were seven sanctioned races: thus, the four highest point totals were counted for all swimmers who participated in more than four of the seven races.)"

Thus, it can be seen that when a tally is made, you pick a swimmer's best races; that is, races that will give him or her the greatest number of points. Joe Grossman and the statistician thought that this system would be the fairest way.

If money won were a criteria there would be inequities. For example: the Nile river (23 miles) marathon pays \$1,000 to the winner while the Chicago Marathon (10 miles) pays \$3,000.

When I first sat down to make the tally, it appeared that Sandra was a shoo-in. When the figures came out, I was as surprised as most of the bulletin readers were to become. However, I was bound by the Federation Rules. I could not arbitrarily ignore them, for then I would be open to even harsher criticism. These rules were voted on and adopted by the members themselves. I myself have over the years attempted to get our members to take a look at these rules for determining pro swimmer's rankings.

If there is anything I've learned to appreciate this past summer, it is the words of the research scientist who once said, "Never claim to make a discovery in science unless you have taken into consideration nature's (and I may add, statistician's) misplaced sense of humor." And this is said with all respect to two of the finest and beautiful pro marathoners I know — Sandra Bucha and Diana Nyad.



An Exciting Story
of
Marathon Swimmers
and
Swimming

\$10⁰⁰

WIND, WAVES AND SUNBURN

by Conrad Wennerberg

WIND, WAVES AND SUNBURN

by Conrad Wennerberg

What distances is man capable of swimming? How much can he endure? In this fascinating story of the sport the incredible triumphs of the great performers are detailed, along with the bitter defeats.

The book begins with a discussion of the swimming ability of man's animal cousins—the documented cases of tigers swimming fourteen miles and elephants swimming twenty-five miles.

The text moves swiftly to the discoveries of scientists in laboratories all over the world as they try to uncover the mysteries of biochemistry and its relationship to endurance and performance in humans. The amateur and professional athlete will surely take interest in the chapters dealing with diet, drugs, and psychology.

Many famous names will be met: Lord Byron and his famous swims; Captain Webb, the first person to swim the English Channel; Gertrude Ederle, the first woman to swim the Channel; William Wrigley, Jr., and his famous Catalina Island swim, in which he offered \$25,000 to the winner; the personalities of the English Channel Races of the 1950s; and the fabulous Greta Andersen, who has beaten every man she has ever competed against at least once—one was a fifty-mile race!

The great Lake Michigan swims, which for three successive years established world records, are vividly described in all their glory by the author from his first-hand observation as coach and trainer for one of the winners. These are the swims that made the names of Abo-Heif and Ted Erikson famous.

Finally, the reader will learn of the great life-and-death swims from sinking ships and downed aircraft. Culled from the author's own records and U.S. Navy information, the stories reveal the terror of the victim as he realizes his situation and struggles for life.

Tabulated results of marathon swim races, the most comprehensive ever to appear, complete this volume.

Wind, Waves and Sunburn is a moving drama, filled with humor, achievement, and tragedy—all portrayed vividly in 75 photographs and illustrations.

About the Author. Born in Chicago, Conrad Wennerberg was introduced to the waters of Lake Michigan at the tender age of four. By the time he was seventeen, he was swimming miles along its shores. Over a twenty-three-year period, the author was startled to learn that he had swum over 8,000 miles while in training sessions with his stars. After attending the Chicago City College and the University of Chicago (pre-med), the author became interested in the physiology of athletes. He began collecting information on marathon swimming some twenty-five years ago, with the results that his files are believed to be the largest on the subject in existence. He has supplied data from time to time to the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation, of which he is a member and was Trustee for the year 1967. He is also a member of the Channel Swimming Association, and the American National Red Cross Senior Lifesaving and Water Safety Organization. In 1969 and 1970 he was an executive staff member of the Illinois Athletic Club. His first-hand experience with the arduous sport of professional marathon swimming is further exemplified by his coaching, training, and managing of two world-record holders: Ted Erikson and Dennis Matuch.

- Illustrated
- 340 action-packed pages
- Appendices
- Index
- \$10.00

TO: A. S. BARNES & COMPANY, INC.
Cranbury, New Jersey 08512.

Please send me _____ copy(ies) of **WIND, WAVES AND SUNBURN** (No. 1168) @ \$10.00 per copy.
[] Check or money order for \$ _____ enclosed. [] Charge my account. (Institutions and trade only.
Personal orders must be prepaid.)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____

STATE _____

ZIP _____