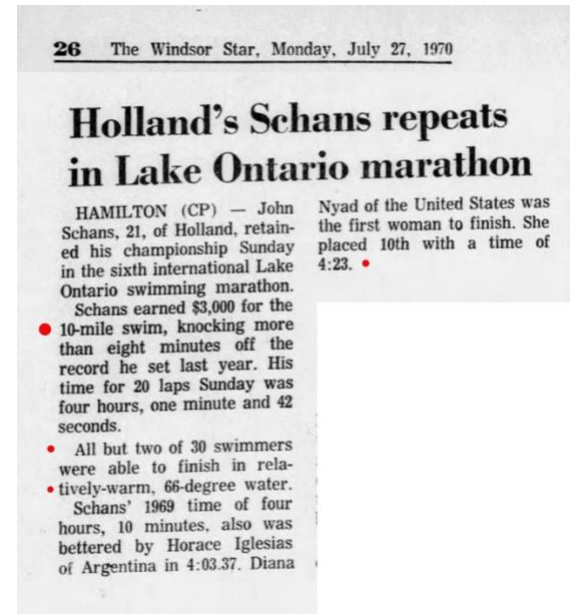
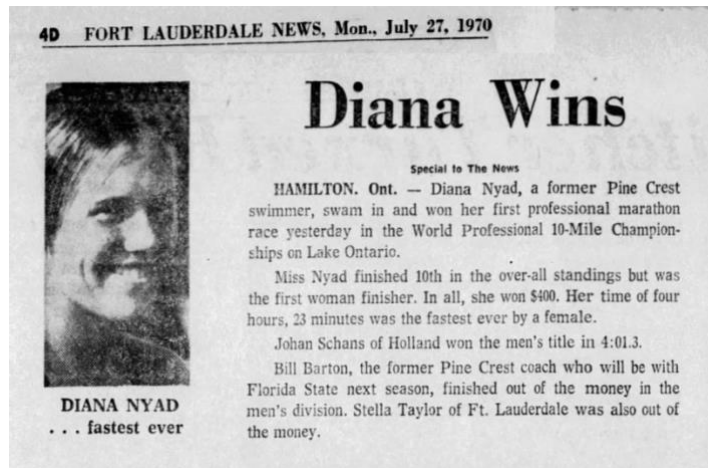


Nyad vs. Nyad

Diana's First Pro Race

In July 1970, Diana Nyad swam her first professional open water race at Hamilton, Ontario: The [Labbat's International Championship](#).



Facts About The Race

Distance: 10 miles

Course: 20 times around a half-mile near-shore loop in Lake Ontario.

Place: [10th overall/first woman](#)

Time: 4 hours, 23 minutes

Water temperature: 65°–66°

Number of competitors: 30

Judith de Nijs: Nyad beat the great Dutch swimmer by 12 minutes. De Nijs continued to race professionally until at least 1975. She swam master's races until at least 2013.

What Nyad Says About The Race

Distance: 40 miles ([“The Courage to Succeed”](#))

Course: Across Lake Ontario (Beachbody 2014 – [21:08](#))

Niagara-on-the-Lake to Toronto (2014 IDEA World – [30:04](#))

Place: 3rd overall/first woman

Time: 18 hours, 20 minutes (K8 East – [18:32, 21:14](#))

37 hours, 38 minutes (Beachbody 2014 – [21:08](#))

Water temperature:

62° ([Other Shores](#), p. 31)

48° ([“The Courage to Succeed”](#))

Number of competitors:

60 ([Other Shores](#), p. 31)

200 ([“The Courage to Succeed”](#))

444 (K8 East – [18:32, 21:14](#))

Judith de Nijs

Nyad often boasts about her 12-minute victory over de Nijs and ridicules her size and appearance. Nyad concludes her de Nijs tales by claiming that her loss to Nyad prompted the six-time world champion to abandon swimming. “So, you know,” [says Nyad in one version](#), “you don't want to kick someone out of the sport altogether. But it is an empowering feeling.”

In the [1975 Nile Swimming Marathon](#), Nyad beat de Nijs again, this time by 16 minutes. However, Nyad doesn't gloat over that victory for obvious reasons.

In the summer of 1970, De Nijs completed a full schedule of races: a [12.5-mile race in Holland](#) four weeks before Hamilton, a [20-mile race in Italy](#) two weeks before, and a [25-mile competition](#) six days after.

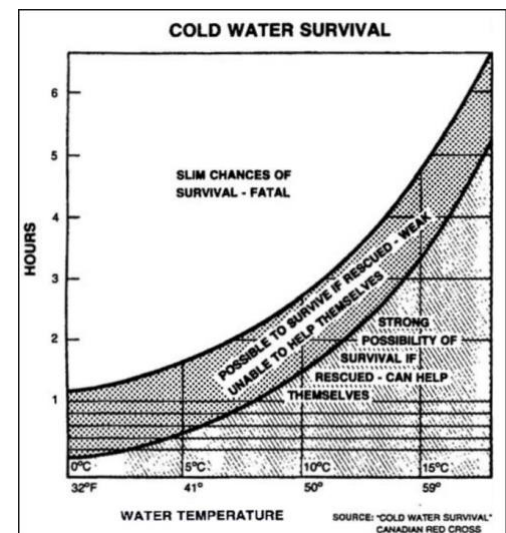
Nyad only completed the Hamilton 10-miler in 1970. She attempted a [28-mile race at the end of August](#) but dropped out.

To make her 12-minute victory over de Nijs seem more epic, Nyad says de Nijs swam butterfly in the 1968 Mexico City Olympics. But de Nijs never qualified for the Olympics. However, she held Dutch and European records in the 400 IM won the 1500-meter freestyle at the 1962 European Championships. (See [her Dutch Wikipedia entry](#).)

NOTES

1. **Anyone spending 37 hours in 48°F water** would have expired long before the time did.
2. **International Swimming Hall of Fame [inductee Sandra Bucha](#)** joined the pro swimming tour in 1973. In her first race against Nyad, Bucha beat her [by over 30 minutes](#). That's as close as Nyad would ever finish to Bucha.

In their last race against each other — *lac St-Jean* in 1975 — Nyad finished [over three hours behind Bucha](#). Yet, Bucha has never said a single derogatory word about Nyad, publicly anyway.



Above: Chart adapted from the Transportation Safety Board of Canada's [report on the sinking of the fishing boat "NADINE."](#)

For more details about Nyad's first professional race and the tales she tells about it, please see ["First Pro Race \(1970\)."](#)

Example Hamilton Race Excerpts

[*Other Shores*](#), 1978, p. 31

“The water temperature was 62 degrees, and out of sixty professional swimmers, I finished tenth. Not a bad showing for the first time out. But better than that was the fact that I beat Judith that day (she never swam again).”

[“The Courage to Succeed,”](#) 1997

“Now I don't know if you know Lake Ontario, but you swim from Niagara on the Lake across 40 miles to Toronto. [*It's about 31 miles — Ed.*] The water is 48 degrees. . . . Well, I finished third among the men that day. There were 200 men swimming in this race.”

Beachbody 2014 ([21:08](#))

“So, I'm standing on the shore of Lake Ontario. It's gonna be a swim across the lake that day, you know, Lake Ontario. If the wind has been blowing offshore from Toronto, that water can go down, down, down. On the day we're gonna go in, it's 48 degrees. . . . Oh my god, it was a cold day. And it was a long day: 37 hours and 38 minutes across Lake Ontario. And I finished third among the men that day, and Judith de Nijs announced her retirement that night.”

K8 East, 2019 ([18:32](#), [21:14](#))

“I found myself standing on the shore of Lake Ontario. The water was 48 degrees that day. . . . And that was a long suffering cold 18 hours and 20 minutes across Lake Ontario. I finished third among the 444 that day and Judith de Nijs, who finished 10th, announced her retirement the next day. So, you know, you don't want to kick someone out of the sport all together, but it is an empowering feeling.”

compiled by Daniel Slosberg

daniel@nyadfactcheck.com

August 18, 2023

