



**WORLD PROFESSIONAL  
MARATHON SWIMMING FEDERATION**  
INC

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Gilles Potvin, President  
Claudio Plit, Vice-President

**DENNIS MATUCH, Secretary**

**c/o ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY**

**3040 SOUTH WABASH**

**CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60616 U.S.A.**

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Dear Members,

At our annual meeting in Chicago last August a large part of it was taken up with certain aspects of the Lake St. John marathon. The most important points discussed were the sponsors' selection methods and notification of swimmers as to their acceptance or non-acceptance in their marathon. Mr. Nicoll Allard, director general of the marathon, replied quickly to my inquiry on your behalf. His reply in essence was, "During the last five marathons there has been more and more requests from marathoners to enter our swim. We have been forced to become more selective. Of the total number of marathoners (121) entered in our last five marathons 21 have not finished, 64 have finished under ten hours, 20 have finished between ten and twelve hours, and 6 had not finished under the time limit." This year the St. John sponsors want to make it understood to the swimmers that the sponsors want to have swimmers who are capable of finishing their marathon under the time limit. They are also thinking of issuing to the swimmers who complete the marathon certificates attesting to the completion of their swim. Mr. Allard also stated that as far as the prize money paid out they have always disbursed the money as STATED IN THE CONTRACT (entry form). He also said that while they did not pay \$1,000 for a new record in 1977 (no new record was set) they did so for the previous four years. As to the notification of swimmers as to their acceptance or non-acceptance in the Lake St. John marathon (or those put on a waiting list) Mr. Allard sent me three copies of telegrams which were and are sent to those swimmers who apply to the sponsors for entry notifying them as to their eligibility. I would like to suggest to all concerned the following: To the swimmers! Read the contract very carefully. You are not obligated to sign it but if you do you must realize that you have agreed to its contents. To those of you who will be away from home for extended periods attending other marathons you must realize that it may be almost impossible for the sponsors' telegrams to reach you. Let the sponsors know where you can be reached or keep in contact with your home address for any news. Please contact the Federation on any and all matters you are not sure of pertaining to professional marathon swimming. We'll try to help. Mr. Allard's prompt reply to my inquiry shows that the sponsors of the Lake St. John marathon wish to co-operate with the swimmers for the betterment of all concerned. I suggest to the sponsors that they try to notify a swimmer as far in advance as possible as to their eligibility. Since a swimmer has usually spent over two months in heavy training, organizing his time available, passport requirements, etc. it is necessary that he/she know of their eligibility as far in advance as possible. The sponsors should also take into consideration the possible state of the weather during their marathon and the reality of a time-limit. Huge waves and cold water could make a time-limit unrealistic and inevitably result in many swimmers going home poorer than they came. I have never heard of a sponsor losing money or prestige because only a few swimmers finished a race or because of bad weather. Bad weather and water conditions can actually enhance

the publicity for the following year. The last point I would like to make to the sponsors concerns the selection of swimmers. If you are not sure of the qualifications of a swimmer please ask our Federation for a recommendation. We are in a better position to assess a swimmer because of our world-wide contacts. If we happen to be wrong about a particular swimmer the sponsors could pass the fault on to the Federation. Too many times a "top" swimmer is left out of a marathon because a new competitor who may have done well in the press or solo swims is allowed entry into a marathon for publicity reasons, or because he/she comes from a foreign country that will add to the international field for the sponsor. Frequently this new swimmer cannot maintain at least a 1.5 MPH average. As an example one of the top amateur swimmers from Australia went unconscious in 82° water during a marathon swim in 1977. He would have undoubtedly been allowed to enter all the pro marathons that year but his experience made him change his mind. His selection would have prevented a qualified and proven swimmer from entering these marathons. In this case we can understand the sponsors' reason in choosing this individual for publicity reasons but it is very hard to understand if the swimmer left out is a proven marathoner. The fairest way to select swimmers is to take them from the Federation's previous year's point standings which lists qualified and proven swimmers. If you have any questions or comments please contact me.

In September we received a letter from the Rio Coronda sponsors asking for a sanctioned swim requirements. I sent the information immediately by airmail. They have not answered. Since their race has a total purse of only \$8,000 for a 28-mile river swim they are not eligible for a Federation sanction. Therefore I ask our members not to enter the Rio Coronda marathon. You'll lose money going there.

A few weeks ago I talked with Mr. Lemarquand of the Paspebiac race. They are planning to hold their swim on August 6th. He is in favor of inviting back the six swimmers of last year's swim plus two new competitors. He has asked the Federation to make a recommendation. We will be glad to do so. I tried to get Mr. Lemarquand to open his race to ten, twenty, or more swimmers but financial conditions limit the field to eight swimmers at the present time. Sometime in the future he is sure that the field will increase considerably but they must move cautiously at the present time. He will be meeting with the race committee in the future and will be informing the Federation with more news in the future.

The Chicago marathon is planned for August 20th with the same prize money as last year. Conrad Wennerberg and myself will again be handling the technical aspects of the race as well as the publicity. We want over 100 entrants this year (last year had 72 entrants). I shall be talking with the city's Special Events Director in the future about the addition of at least two more woman's prizes.

Buck Dawson (Executive Director of the International Swimming Hall of Fame), Commander Gerald Forsberg (President of the Channel Swimming Association), and myself have been working in bringing up to date the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame. Things at this time are moving slow but we have accomplished a few programs and soon hope to announce new honorees to the Hall. We have selected Buck as chairman of the Hall. The headquarters will be at the Hall of Fame in Florida.

Last November Douglas J. Gerrard, manager of sports at the Canadian National Exhibition, and H.G. Rautenberg, Vice-President of the Wrigley Chewing Gum Company in Toronto and I had a meeting in Chicago concerning a possible pro marathon swim at the C.N.E. this year. Since this will be the 100th year of the C.N.E. they want to have a large and spectacular program as possible. Mr. Gerrard and I are still working on this potential race but nothing is definite yet. I would suggest that all of our members write to Mr. Gerrard, Manager-Sports, Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, M6K 3C3, Canada and express your interest in competing in a C.N.E. lake Ontario race.

The Federation is also in contact and awaiting word from one of the world's largest distillers on a potential English Channel pro race, an international candy manufacturer, Schlitz Beer Company, and the recreation department of

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a large Florida city in hopes of creating five new pro marathon swims for our members. It takes a lot of time and effort so please bear with us while we work out the problems.

We would like to extend our best wishes to the Australian Long Distance Swimming Federation and the New Zealand Long Distance Swimming Federation. Both Federations seem to be on their way to holding local marathon races. The Australian Federation is giving out money prizes in some of their races. We hope they grow in membership and prizes offered. We will help them in any way possible.

#### Tentative Dates of 1978 Sanctioned Marathons

Lake St. John: July 31  
Paspebiac: August 6  
Chicago: August 20

Chibougamau will probably be held the weekend before St. John. There is a good chance for another Quebec swim on the weekend between Paspebiac and Chicago marathons.

Best wishes to all members  
for the new year,

*Dennis Matuch*

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