

**Great Lakes Crossing Organization**

**(GLCO)**

**Registration Package**

# **Table of Contents**

1) Introduction to the Great Lakes Crossing Organization, (GLCO)	3
2) Costs and Services	6
3) Application Checklist	7
4) Swimming History and Background	7
5) Notice of Attempt	8
6) Waiver of Liability	10
7) Medical Examination	12
8) Medical History and Testament	15
9) World Open Water Swimming Association (WOWSA), Sanctioning	16
10) Rules of Marathon Swimming, Federation of Marathon Swimmers	18

## Section 1: Introduction

Lake Ontario has a long and rich history of marathon swimming. It is one of the original homes of marathon swimming in the world, along with other such historically significant marathon swimming mecca's as the English Channel and the Catalina Channel.

Marathon swimming in Lake Ontario started with the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. The CNE officially started in 1879 and swimming races during the CNE became one of the most popular attractions. Over the years there were various races of different distances,

One of the first heroes of marathon swimming was George Young. In 1927, chewing gum magnate and owner of the Chicago Cubs, wanted to attract attention to his new island off the coast of Los Angeles, Catalina Island. So he decided to hold a race from Catalina to Los Angeles and offered \$25,000 to the winner! 55 people started the race and only one finished, the veteran of many CNE races, Canadian, George Young.

However, it wasn't until 1954 when the CNE offered the world-famous American marathon swimmer, Florence Chadwick, \$10,000 if she could be the first person to swim across the Lake. An unheralded, 16 year old Canadian named Marilyn Bell also joined in the attempt although was not offered the prize. And in what became one of the greatest moments in Canadian and marathon swimming history, Chadwick did not complete the 51.5 km / 32.2 mile swim... but Bell did. In a time of 20 hours and 59 minutes. She became a national hero and a world famous marathon swimmer.

Just as George Young had ties with the Catalina Island marathon swim, Marilyn Bell had ties with the English Channel, in 1956 she went on to become the youngest person to swim the English Channel.

Since that time Canada has produced many world renowned marathon swimmers too.



### THE VICTOR IN THE CATALINA SWIM

*A Seventeen-Year-Old Marvel!*

By L DE B. HANDLEY

GEORGE YOUNG'S victory in the recent Catalina-channel then, the greatest long-distance in the annals of swimming, takes us back to the days of sport when one recalls no athletic exploit outstanding features of which go weaving so extraordinary, nor more romantic adventure, high achievement. It reads more i bit of stirring fiction, a true chronicle of facts. A young boy, George Young, forced by circumstances ck up any old job to get him through a party. Another, Young, I chiefly for the latter's the idea of entering the metropolitan contest. If won the two-thousand-dollar prize offered William Wrigley Jr., he himself. It was enable d to gratify his mother, who wished to leave the next climate of the world and health and art in California. At first, the obstacles in ath looked unsurmountable. He saw no means in thing, however, for the costly railroad to the Pacific Coast. He determined nevertheless,

rescue. Mr. and Mrs. Jack Foster, of Quincy, Massachusetts, on a honeymoon motor tour came along in their car and stopped to make inquiries. They learned of the young Canucks, they generously offered a lift, and in time conveyed the boys safely to their destination. Young landed in Los Angeles an unconsidered candidate for the big

for the English Channel at eleven hours and five minutes, while it to the latter nearly sixteen hours make the Catalina swim: "I am not a swimmer," he said, "but I am a swimmer of international stature, and several high-rate speed champions. We co granted that he could complete route, seemed even then negligible that more than one hundred no swimmer made the distance to start against him, including th of the eight only conquer of the English Channel number of English swimmers of international stature, and several high-rate speed champions. We co grant that the invincible untried youth from across border would vanquish so table a field."

Nor Ross, of Chie world's greatest swimmer til the advent of John We muller, was the univer sally acknowledged champion. His performances was estima to be more than one min faster per mile than his spe ish rival. Ross showed uncontestable evidence of exceptional stamina; his hundred and fifty pounds avoided the cold water as advance that the coldest w would not affect him.

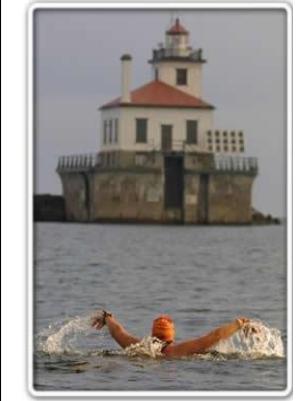


Between 1978 – 1992, Cindy Nicholas became the “Queen of the Channel” by swimming the English Channel 19 times, more than any other woman at the time, including 5 double Crossings!

At 16 years old, the same age as Marilyn Bell had done it, Cindy also completed a Lake Ontario Crossing in 15 hours and 10 minutes!

The next legendary Canadian marathon swimmer was Vicki Keith. Her list of marathon swimming accomplishments are long, but more than worthy to note:

- First crossing of all five Great Lakes (completed in a 2 month period)
- First double crossing of Lake Ontario
- First butterfly swim across the English Channel
- Longest solo swim (time) 63 hours 40 minutes
- 129 hours, 45 minutes continuous swimming (pool record)
- Greatest distance, butterfly (male or female) 80.2 km
- Most crossings of Lake Ontario (six)
- Circumnavigation of Sydney Harbour (butterfly)
- Crossing of the Strait of Juan de Fuca in British Columbia (butterfly)
- Crossing of Lake Ontario (butterfly)
- Crossing of Catalina Channel (butterfly)
- Raised over \$1,000,000 to help children with physical disabilities



Recently young Canadian marathon swimming girls have been setting age records. Annaleise Carr, who at 14 years old, in 2012, became the second youngest swimmer to complete a Lake Ontario Crossing, in 26 hours and 41 minutes, and also raised several hundred thousand dollars for a children's cancer camp. In 2014, Trinity Arsenault beat Annaleise's age record for the second youngest by 87 days. However, Natalie Lambert's swim in 2007 still ranks as the youngest swimmer to cross Lake Ontario, at 14 years and 27 days.



Despite the glorious past and historic roots of marathon swimming in Lake Ontario, it has not prospered. Although at one time completing a Lake Ontario Crossing was held in equal regard with The English Channel and the Catalina Channel, it has since languished. The English Channel has had well over 1100 swimmers complete the swim and Catalina Channel has had over 250 swimmers complete the swim. Even the relative late-comer to the game, the Manhattan Island Marathon Swim, now has dozens of people per year circumnavigating the island, with a long waiting list. While Lake Ontario has had only 54 swimmers complete 66 swims across the Lake in the 60 years since Marilyn Bell first completed the swim in 1954.

While a Lake Ontario Crossing is certainly as daunting of a feat of endurance and possibly even a harder swim than many of its peers, the main reason that more people have not attempted a Lake Ontario Crossing is because of the logistics required by the

existing governing body and lack of equipment and assistance provided, including the boats necessary for the Crossing.

As such a new governing body has been created, called the Great Lakes Crossing Organization (GLCO). The goal of GLCO is to provide everything that is necessary for a swimmer to attempt a Crossing of any of the Great Lakes or other marathon swims. This includes a safe, logically friendly and globally recognized way for swimmers from anywhere in the world to come and attempt one of the greatest marathon swims in the world!



The Great Lakes Crossing Organization (GLCO) was created by members of the Lake Ontario Swim Team (L.O.S.T. Swimming) to try and promote marathon swimming in Canada and bring back the glory days of Lake Ontario Crossings.

The Lake Ontario Swim Team, or LOST Swimming, was established in 2006 with one member, Rob Kent, who decided that Lake Ontario might be a good place to train for marathon swimming.

Since that humble start, LOST has grown into one of the largest open water swim teams in the world, with hundreds of members who come to Oakville to swim and train in Lake Ontario each Saturday between early June and late September. LOSTies have also travelled to races and marathon swims around the world, from Key West to Catalina and from New York to Dover, as well as having several members who have completed a Lake Ontario Crossing too! Now with the wealth of experienced marathon swimmers, boaters, crew and organizational ability in the LOST membership, LOST has created GLCO to better serve the world marathon swimming community.

With this offering, LOST now provides one-stop shopping for marathon swimmers by providing: dual recognition and sanctioning of the swim globally by GLCO and WOSA (World Open Water Swimming Association), sanctioning that uses internationally recognized safety rules and regulations, all the necessary boats and crew, as well as all the necessary permits, insurance and even a recommended training program and personal guidance from experienced marathon swimmers and crew... not to mention the appropriate recognition for such a world class accomplishment!

So if your goal is to achieve a Great Lake Crossing... please read on to find the rules, requirements and registration necessary to complete a GLCO sanctioned swim across Lake Ontario!

## **Section 2: Costs and Services**

The main goal of the Great Lakes Crossing Organization is to provide a safe and professional one-stop-shop for people who would like to attempt a Great Lake Crossing. Now anyone from around the world can easily attempt a Great Lake Crossing and conquer one of the “Four Classics of Marathon Swimming”! (Lake Ontario, English Channel, Catalina Channel and Manhattan Island Marathon Swim) We provide virtually all you need in order to swim one of the greatest marathon swims in the world!

### **What we provide:**

- a large boat (30'+) with captain and boat crew
- a large “swimmers zodiac” and captain
- a smaller “back up zodiac”
- experienced and qualified swim-master(s),
- the required safety equipment for such a swim,
- organization and zodiac to complete the required qualifying swim (if needed),
- option of dual certification and recognition by the World Open Water Swimming Association (WOWSA) and the Great Lakes Crossing Organization (GLCO),
- membership to LOST Swimming for the summer to train with and get advice from numerous other experienced marathon swimmers,
- printed map marking your Crossing route,
- a GLCO certificate of completion to hang above your fireplace,
- email access to professional and experienced marathon coaching,
- the necessary insurance covering the swimmer and crew,
- on-land logistics and transportation coordination, as needed
- facilitation of accommodation, as needed,
- administration and obtaining of all necessary permits and permissions,
- international promotion and recognition of your certified swim through WOWSA and LOSTswimming.com
- name and accomplishment on a plaque at the LOST Beach in Oakville!

### **What you provide:**

- a brave, adventurous and well trained and prepared marathon swimmer
- the swimmer’s crew, we recommend 3-6 knowledgeable friends or family to feed and care for the swimmer’s needs. If there is a shortage, we may be able to provide additional swimmer’s crew too.
- food and drink for the swimmer and swimmer’s crew
- proper documentation, as per requirements in this package
- **payment for the swim:**

**(note: prices do vary depending on factors like distance, lake, crew size, number of boats required, etc, but this is a typical estimate):**

- a \$1500 deposit due at the time of booking
- deposit is due at least 60 days prior to the swim
- \$500 of deposit is non-refundable as the boats must be pre-booked
- the balance paid PRIOR to the start of the swim
- once the swimmer has started swimming there will be no refunds.
- **total price of a Solo Lake Ontario Crossing is \$4500** and may be paid on-line at LOSTswimming.com. (because of numerous variable, prices are subject to change, this is just a current estimate).

## **Section 3:** Application Checklist

Please fully complete and return the following forms. Note that incomplete documentation will not be accepted and will not reserve as spot for an attempted Crossing.

	(Check)	
1	Swimming History and Background	_____
2	Notice of Attempt	_____
3	Waiver of Liability	_____
4	Medical Examination	_____
5	Medical History and Testament	_____
6	Deposit Cheque for \$1500 CAD (made out to LOST Swimming)	_____

All documents may be scanned and emailed to: [miguel@embraceopenwater.com](mailto:miguel@embraceopenwater.com) or [RobertJayKent@gmail.com](mailto:RobertJayKent@gmail.com) and the deposit money may be paid on-line at LOSTswimming.com.

Please remember to keep a copy of all documents for your own records. Also if any information should change with regards to anything relevant to the swim, please contact GLCO as soon as possible so accommodations can be made.

## **Section 4:** Swimming History and Background

Please list in detail your previous swimming history, including dates, events and accomplishments. Include swim teams, major competitions, marathon swims and races, cold water swims, etc. If you do not have an extensive background in swimming, please describe why you think you would be able to complete such a major marathon swim.

(provide additional page if required)

## **Section 5: Notice of Attempt**

1 Name\* \_\_\_\_\_  
 (As you would like it to appear on the official GLCO certificate & list of successful swims )

1. Address: \_\_\_\_\_

2. City: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Province/State: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Age as of swim date \_\_\_\_\_

7. Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

8. E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

10. Hotel/ Travel Residence while in Ontario for swim

\_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

11. Name of Medical Doctor  
 \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

12. Approved list of medication for swim (if any):  
 \_\_\_\_\_

13. Will attempt: Single Crossing \_\_\_\_\_ Double \_\_\_\_\_ Lake Ontario Crossing

(or other: \_\_\_\_\_)

14. Route to be swum (check one):

A) \_\_\_\_\_ **LOST Route** – 42.2 km / 26.2 miles (marathon distance),  
 Port Dalhousie to Oakville (recommended route and our favorite!)

B) \_\_\_\_\_ Toronto Route – 51.5 km Niagara-on-the-Lake to Toronto

C) \_\_\_\_\_ Other, please specify and give reasoning:  
 \_\_\_\_\_

16) Preferred Departure Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_  
(typically between mid July and mid September)

17) Back up Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

18) Has the 6 Hour Qualifying Swim has been Completed? Yes / No

19) 6 Hour Qualifying Swim will be Completed elsewhere, prior to Swim? Yes / No

20) I would like to arrange to do a Qualifying Swim with GLCO / LOST? Yes / No

21) Preferred date and location for qualifying swim? \_\_\_\_\_

22) Will this be a relay swim? Yes/No If Yes, please list each swimmer below:

## **Section 6: Waiver of Liability**

### **ASSUMPTION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RISK**

**BY SIGNING THIS DOCUMENT YOU WILL WAIVE CERTAIN LEGAL RIGHTS,  
INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO SUE. PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have voluntarily requested to enter and participate in an effort to swim across \_\_\_\_\_. I understand the extreme dangers and risk of such an undertaking and am fully aware of the difficulty involved, even for the most conditioned athlete. I understand that I should not enter this event unless I am in excellent health and am fully trained and conditioned for this strenuous task.

I am also aware of the unusual weather conditions that may prevail during the swim at any time of the year, including but not limited to: high winds; cold water; dense fog; large waves; boat and ship traffic and strong currents among other hazards

I AM AWARE THAT THESE ACTIVITIES AND MY PRESENCE AND ACTIVITY ON AND ABOUT THE WATERCRAFT AND IN THE ADJACENT WATER CONSTITUTES A HAZARDOUS ACTIVITY. I AM VOLUNTARILY PARTICIPATING IN THIS ACTIVITY WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE DANGER INVOLVED, AND AGREE TO ASSUME ANY AND ALL RISKS OF BODILY INJURY, DEATH OR PROPERTY DAMAGE, WHETHER THOSE RISKS ARE KNOWN OR UNKNOWN.

I verify this statement by placing my initials here: \_\_\_\_\_

If under 18, Parent or Guardian's initials here, as well: \_\_\_\_\_

Nevertheless, with knowledge of these facts, and in consideration of acceptance of my entry, I intend to be legally bound for myself, my heirs, executors and administrators, hereby waive and forever discharge any and all rights and claims for damages that may accrue to me against the Great Lakes Crossing Organization, the sponsors and directors of the event and municipalities involved, the individuals assisting with the event, or any person connected with this event, their representatives, successors and assignees (collectively, the "Releasees"), from all rights, claims, or liability for damage for any and all injuries to me or my property, arising out of, or in connection with: (i) my participation in this event, (ii) my access to and presence on and about the watercraft and in the adjacent water, (iii) the negligence or other acts, whether directly or indirectly connected to this activity and however caused by any Releasee, and/or (iv) the condition of the watercraft, the adjacent water and other areas where this activity may occur, whether or not I am then participating in such activity. I also agree that I, my assignees, heirs, distributees, guardians, next of kin, spouse and legal representatives will not make a claim against, sue, or attach the property of any Releasee in connection with any of the matters covered by this Waiver of Liability. I further agree that I will indemnify and hold the Releasees harmless against all claims, demands, and causes of action including court costs and attorney's fees, directly or indirectly arising from any action or proceeding brought by or prosecuted for my benefit.

This release extends to all claims of every kind and nature whatsoever, whether known or unknown.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ THIS AGREEMENT AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENTS. I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND A CONTRACT BETWEEN MYSELF AND THE GREAT LAKES CROSSING ORGANIZATION / LAKE ONTARIO SWIM TEAM, AND SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

If Signed by Parent or Guardian: I verify that the dangers of the activities and the significance of this Waiver of Liability were explained by myself to the Participant and that the Participant understood them.

Executed at (city, province, country) \_\_\_\_\_,

Date: dd/mmm/yyyy: \_\_\_\_\_

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PARTICIPANT, printed and signature date

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WITNESS, printed and signature date

PARENT, printed and signature, IF PARTICIPANT IS UNDER 18 date

## **Section 7: Medical Examination**

Please have your doctor complete this entire medical certificate.

Name of Swimmer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Age as of Swim Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Healthcare Provider (if not OHIP): \_\_\_\_\_

Policy Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact name in case of emergency: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship of contact: \_\_\_\_\_

The above named wishes to be examined as to his/her physical fitness to participate in an attempt to swim across Lake Ontario, (or other major body of water). You are kindly asked to bear in mind that it is a very challenging physical undertaking.

1. Ears: R Drum \_\_\_\_\_ Canal \_\_\_\_\_ L Drum \_\_\_\_\_ Canal \_\_\_\_\_

2. Sinuses: Nose, throat \_\_\_\_\_ Chest \_\_\_\_\_

3. Cardiovascular system \_\_\_\_\_ Abdomen \_\_\_\_\_

4. Joints and Limbs \_\_\_\_\_  
(The Great Lakes Crossing Organization welcomes and admires disabled swimmers; even severe physical handicaps, absent limbs, etc. we do not rule out a Lake Ontario Crossing attempt given the appropriate training).

5. Height \_\_\_\_\_ Weight \_\_\_\_\_

6. Urine: Albumen \_\_\_\_\_ Sugar \_\_\_\_\_

7. Chest X-ray (a chest x-ray is not an essential requirement but is recommended if the person is over 40 years of age or if there is any previous history of chest disease.) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Blood Pressure \_\_\_\_\_ Nervous System \_\_\_\_\_

9. EKG \_\_\_\_\_ (If over 50 or if any relevant abnormality is found on examination.)

Have you ever had any of the following?

- |     |   |          |
|-----|---|----------|
| 10. | Ear trouble, deafness?  | Yes / No |
| 11. | Sinus trouble?  | Yes / No |
| 12. | Chest disease, including asthma, bronchitis, T.B. or collapsed lung?                                | Yes / No |
| 13. | Blackouts or fainting?  | Yes / No |
| 14. | Nervous disorders including persistent headaches or concussion?                                     | Yes / No |
| 15. | Anxiety, "nerves", nervous breakdown?   | Yes / No |
| 16. | Diseases of the heart and circulation, including high blood pressure?                               | Yes / No |
| 17. | Do you have diabetes or hypoglycemia?   | Yes / No |
| 18. | Do you regularly or frequently take any medication or other treatment with or without prescription? | Yes / No |
| 19. | If so, please list _____  |          |

20. List of medication for approval:

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21. Are you currently receiving medical care, or have you consulted any doctor in the past year? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes / No  
If so, please detail \_\_\_\_\_

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22. Do you smoke? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes / No  
23. Have you ever had a eating disorder? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes / No  
24. Have you attended or been admitted to a hospital? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes / No  
25. If so, please detail \_\_\_\_\_

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26. Have you had a previous medical examination for the GLCO for which the result was not satisfactory? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes / No

If yes, please detail \_\_\_\_\_

27. Medical doctor's remarks:

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After examination, I consider this patient to be: fit / unfit (circle one) to attempt to swim across Lake Ontario (or other large body of water).

Name of Medical Doctor: (please print)

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Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of examining Medical Doctor

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number  
(\_\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Physician: Please Attach a Professional Business Card

## **Section 8: Medical History and Testament**

I, the swimmer, hereby declare that to the best of my knowledge, I am in good general health and declare that I have not omitted any information which might be relevant to my ability during this swim.

I authorize my medical doctor to disclose any detail of my past or present medical history, if requested to do so, to the GLCO Board of Directors. I also agree that relevant information about my health may be disclosed to those persons directly concerned with my attempt to swim across Lake Ontario (or other large body of water).

Swimmer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Section 9: WORLD OPEN WATER SWIMMING ASSOCIATION (WOWSA), SANCTIONING**

The Great Lakes Crossing Organization, GLCO, abides by the Sanctioning requirements as put forth by the World Open Water Swimming Association, WOWSA. Please read over the requirements below and if there are any discrepancies please notify GLCO and we will see if modifications may be made prior to the swim. Modifications after the swim are not allowed. GLCO does reserve the right to abide by local and historic rules and regulations.

(note: WOWSA sanctioning is optional, but GLCO still adheres to these rules)

**WOWSA 17.1** – Marathon and channel swims shall follow the rules as indicated in this document.

**WOWSA 17.2** – Channel swims shall be from shore to shore. Athletes start and finish on land with no body of water behind. The land must be part of a naturally occurring contiguous part of the shore. Stopping at a pier or man-made jetty is not permitted.

**WOWSA 17.3** – Athletes shall use no swim aids other than goggles, ear plugs, one non-neoprene, non-bubble swim cap, one porous, non-neoprene swimsuit and illumination for night swims. No flotation devices, propulsive aids, protective swimwear, or full-length swimwear is permitted.

**WOWSA 17.4** – Swimsuits shall not go beyond the end of the groin or shoulders.

**WOWSA 17.5** – Shark Shields® or other shark repellent devices or gels may be used by the escort crew, kayaker or paddler who is alongside the athlete. Swim streamers may be used if the local governing body permits them.

**WOWSA 17.6** – The WOWSA Observer Report for either solo swimmers or relays must be completely filled in for verification.

**WOWSA 17.7** – On a two-way or three-way or multiple-island crossing, the athlete must completely clear the water line at all stops. The athlete can rest, sit or stand on land for up to 10 minutes while accepting fuel, hydration or skin lubrication from another individual.

**WOWSA 17.8** – The timing of the swim shall be from the moment a start is indicated (by voice, whistle or air horn) until the time the athlete clears the water on the opposite natural connecting shore.

**WOWSA 17.9** – The Observer is responsible for the timing of the swim and for the interpretation of the rules including the right to cancel the swim in adverse conditions or in cases where there is physical danger to the health and well-being of the athlete or crew.

**WOWSA 17.10** – Pilots, navigators and crew must receive the permission from the local governing authority to cross a channel (e.g., Coast Guard).

**WOWSA 17.11** – WOWSA shall not observe or recognize marathon swims or channel swims by athletes under the age of 14.

**WOWSA 17.12** – Paddlers, kayakers and/or pace swimmers are permitted as long as they are not used as physical support by the athlete.

**WOWSA 17.13** – No alcoholic beverages, stimulants or drugs that are on the United States Anti-Drug Agency or World Anti-Drug Agency shall be consumed by the athlete during the swim or 12 hours before the swim start. No alcoholic beverages or narcotic drugs shall be consumed by the Observer, boat crew member, or anyone associated with the swim from dock to dock.

**WOWSA 17.14** – WOWSA will not ratify a swim if any rules are not followed.

**WOWSA 17.15** – If any situation arises which is not covered by the current WOWSA rules, the Channel Swimming Association rules shall be referenced and followed. In all cases, WOWSA shall remain the right to interpret its rules relative to the athlete's actions.

**WOWSA 17.16** – Relays shall consist of 2 or more swimmers.

**WOWSA 17.17** – Each athlete shall swim for one hour each time he enters the water. This duration is called a leg.

**WOWSA 17.18** – On receipt of a time signal, the changeover to the new athlete shall be made as soon as is practically possible (within one minute) after the previous athlete has completed his leg. In the exchange, the new athlete can either touch the preceding swimmer or enter the water behind the swimmer and swim past him.

**WOWSA 17.19** – Team members must rotate in the same order throughout the swim. Substitution of a relay athlete can only occur before the first team member enters the water for his first leg of the swim. The substitute must have been approved prior to the relay start as an alternate.

**WOWSA 17.20** – Marathon swims and channel swims can be attempted with wetsuits, fins, buoyancy devices and other equipment such as protective swimwear, shark cages, jellyfish nets or waterproof audio devices. Swims with such equipment shall be defined as Assisted Swims according to the method and/or aids used.

**WOWSA 17.21** – If a local governing body or swim director wishes to deviate from the WOWSA rules, prior written permission must be obtained, and exceptions will be noted.

## **Section 10: Rules of Marathon Swimming**

**GLCO and WOWSA support and accept the Rules of Marathon Swimming as defined on January 6, 2014 by the Marathon Swimmers Federation.**

However, the rules, guidelines and traditions of existing and future governing bodies are respected by WOWSA. That is, the MSF Rules do not supersede or replace the rules of the Channel Swimming Association, Channel Swimming & Piloting Federation, Great Lakes Crossing Organization, Farallon Islands Swimming Association, British Long Distance Swimming Association, Irish Long Distance Swimming Association, Lake Tahoe Swimming Society, International Ice Swimming Association, International Winter Swimming Association, Lake Erie Open Water Swimming Association, Santa Barbara Channel Swimming Association, Vancouver Open Water Swimming Association, Northeast Kingdom Open Water Swimming Association, Japan International Open Water Swimming Association, Tsugaru Channel Swimming Association, Menorca Channel Swimming Association, Association of Korea Open Water Swimming, Universal Marathon Cold Swimming Association, **Lake Ontario Swim Team** or the **Great Lakes Crossing Organization**, Solo Swims of Ontario, Dubai Open Water Swimming Association, Great Lakes Open Water Swimming Association, Massachusetts Open Water Swimming Association, Asociacion de cruce a nado del Estrecho de Gibraltar, FINA (Fédération Internationale du Natation Amateur), Tsugaru Strait Swimming Association, Hawaiian Channel Swim Association, Kaiwai Channel Association, and other local governing bodies.

### **Purpose**

**The Marathon Swimmers Federation (MSF) Rules of Marathon Swimming** are a set of standards and guidelines for undertaking a solo, unassisted open-water marathon swim in any body of water.

MSF Rules may be used by any swimmer who wishes to attempt a swim for which there is no local governing body. They also may be used by local governing bodies wishing to adopt a global standard — or as a foundation upon which to establish local exceptions.

MSF Rules do not override local rules — they aim to codify their shared spirit.

### **The Spirit of Marathon Swimming**

MSF Rules are guided by the traditions and spirit of unassisted marathon swimming.

Marathon swimmers embrace the challenge of crossing wild, open bodies of water with minimal assistance beyond their own innate physical strength and mental fortitude. There are ways to make the sport easier, but marathon swimmers consciously eschew them.

Marathon swimmers take pride that their achievements can be meaningfully compared to the achievements of previous generations, because the standard equipment of the sport has not changed significantly since 1875.

### **Definitions**

**Marathon Swim:** A nonstop open-water swim, undertaken according to standardized rules, and requiring at least several hours of sustained effort to complete. Ten kilometers without significant assistance from currents is the minimum distance considered to be a marathon swim.

**Nonstop:** Remaining in the water for the entire duration of the swim from start to finish without intentional physical contact with escort vessels, support personnel, or other objects (fixed or floating).

**Unassisted:** Without artificial assistance to performance, other than the standard equipment of the sport. Any swim using nonstandard performance-enhancing equipment, or otherwise violating the rules of unassisted marathon swimming, is considered an Assisted Swim.

### **Standard Equipment of Marathon Swimming**

- One swimsuit made of porous, textile material. For males, the suit must not extend below the thigh or above the waist. For females it must not extend below the thigh, onto the neck, or beyond the shoulder.
- One bathing cap made of latex or silicone.
- Goggles, earplugs, and noseclips.
- Sunscreen and grease.
- Escort boat, pilot, and crew.
- Nutrition, and equipment to transport it between the boat and swimmer. The swimmer may not be supported or towed by the feed equipment.
- Paddlers and support swimmers.
- Observer(s)

The swimmer does not need to declare the use of standard equipment (i.e., it is assumed).

Any equipment not specifically listed here is considered nonstandard equipment. Use of nonstandard equipment must always be declared, even if the equipment's benefit to performance is ambiguous.

### **Examples of nonstandard performance-enhancing equipment:**

Swims using nonstandard, performance-enhancing equipment cannot be considered unassisted.

Examples include:

Equipment that may retain or increase warmth – e.g., wetsuits, neoprene caps, booties, gloves.

Equipment that may increase speed – e.g., flippers, paddles, shark cages.

Equipment that may increase buoyancy – e.g., pull buoys, wetsuits.

Auditory pacing aids – e.g., music players, metronomes.

Electronic devices attached to the swimmer, which transmit information to the swimmer – e.g., wristwatches, navigation aids, biofeedback monitors.

Underwater streamers.

Performance-enhancing drugs on the World Anti-Doping Agency List of Prohibited Substances.

### **Observers**

The swim observer documents the facts of a swim and verifies the swim's adherence to the declared rules. Documentation produced by a qualified observer is the single most important source material for authenticating a swim claim.

### **Qualifications**

**The primary qualifications of an observer are:**

#### **Independence**

The observer must be capable of dispassionately evaluating the swim and its adherence to the declared rules. If the observer is acquainted with the swimmer, (s)he must be able to separate the personal relationship from his/her duties to observe, document, and verify.

#### **Expertise**

The observer must be knowledgeable about the rules, traditions, and spirit of marathon swimming, and with the responsibilities of observing a marathon swim.

**The MSF maintains a global network of qualified, willing observers. Local observer networks and official trainings are offered by following organizations:**

- Channel Swimming & Piloting Federation
- Channel Swimming Association

- Great Lakes Crossing Organization
- Santa Barbara Channel Swimming Association
- NYC Swim

Observers who have not attended an official training may also demonstrate expertise through their personal history in the sport – as a swimmer, crew-member, or administrator.

## **Special Considerations**

### **Very Long Swims**

If a single observer is not able to maintain alertness for the entire duration of the swim, an additional observer is necessary. The MSF recommends two observers for swims anticipated to last longer than 18 hours, and three observers for swims anticipated to last longer than 30 hours. Overnight swims in the 10-18 hour range may also require a second observer.

On swims with multiple observers, a lead observer should be designated to coordinate the observer team and documentation procedures.

### **High-Profile or Unprecedented Swims**

Swims of unusual magnitude or notoriety – especially unprecedented swims – demand a stricter standard for observer qualifications and reputation. In such cases, it is essential that the observers are trusted by the broader community of marathon swimmers.

The MSF recommends a minimum of two highly qualified, reputable observers for high-profile swims, to reinforce their credibility.

## **“Golden Rules” of Marathon Swimming**

### **Transparency of Swim Conduct**

The intended conduct of the swim – including Swim Rules and any nonstandard equipment to be used – must be communicated fully and clearly before the swim begins, to everyone involved in the swim attempt, and in all public promotion. The declared rules and equipment may not be changed once the swim has begun.

### **Independent Observation**

Independent and knowledgeable observers must document the facts of the swim and verify the swimmer's adherence to the Swim Rules.

### **Swim Rules**

This section defines standard MSF Swim Rules for a one-way solo swim (Point A to Point B). Standard rules for multi-leg swims, circumnavigation swims, relay swims, and stage swims are defined in the MSF Rules Supplement.

Individual swimmers or local governing bodies may adopt MSF Swim Rules in full, as shorthand for “standard conduct.” Or, they may adapt the rules to local circumstances, as long as two conditions are met:

1. Any modifications of standard swim conduct are declared.
2. The modifications do not violate the spirit of unassisted marathon swimming.

The declared Swim Rules must be read aloud by the observer in the presence of the swimmer and all support personnel before the swim begins.

### **Start & Finish**

The swim begins when the swimmer enters the water from a natural shore. If geographic obstacles (e.g., cliffs) prevent the swimmer from clearing the water at the start, the swimmer may begin the swim by touching and releasing from part of the natural shore (e.g., cliff face).

The swim finishes when the swimmer clears the water on a natural shore, beyond which there is no navigable water. If geographic obstacles prevent the swimmer from clearing the water at the finish, the swimmer may finish by touching part of the natural shore.

### **Physical Contact**

The swimmer may not make intentional supportive contact with any vessel, object, or support personnel at any time during the swim.

### **Standard Equipment**

The swimmer may wear a single textile swimsuit with standard coverage, one latex or silicone cap, goggles, ear plugs, nose clips, and may grease the body. The swimmer may not use any additional equipment that benefits speed, buoyancy, endurance, or heat retention.

### **Drafting**

The swimmer may not intentionally draft behind any escort vessel or support swimmer. The swimmer may swim alongside an escort vessel, but may not intentionally position him or herself inside the vessel's bow and displacement waves, except while feeding.

#### **Support Swimmers**

A support swimmer (or swimmers) may accompany the solo swimmer for a limited duration. Multiple support swims are allowed, but should not occur consecutively. The MSF recommends a maximum of one hour per support swim and a minimum of one hour between support swims.

The support swimmer may not intentionally touch the solo swimmer and must position him or herself at least slightly behind the solo swimmer.

### **Authority on the Escort Vessel**

The observer is responsible for documenting the facts of the swim, interpreting the swim rules, and keeping the official time.

The pilot of the escort vessel (or lead pilot, if there are multiple vessels) is the ultimate authority in all other matters. (S)he may cancel the swim at any time, for any reason. The pilot is responsible for following all relevant local maritime regulations.

### **Responsible Environmental Stewardship**

Everyone involved in the swim attempt – swimmer, observer, support personnel, and escort boat personnel – must treat the environment respectfully and prevent avoidable harm to marine wildlife and ecosystems.

### **Continuance of the Spirit of Marathon Swimming**

If any issue regarding swim conduct arises that the Swim Rules do not clearly address, the swimmer should act – and the observer should judge – in accordance with the spirit of unassisted marathon swimming.

### **Using MSF Rules For Your Swim**

The MSF Rules of Marathon Swimming are licensed through Creative Commons, and may be used or adapted by individual swimmers or local sanctioning bodies according to the following guidelines:

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## **End Notes**

Linked Documents

Rules Supplement (including Special Swim Types)

Endorsements: Marathon swimmers and organizations who endorse MSF Rules

Press Release for launch of MSF Rules

## **Rules of Marathon Swimming – Supplement**

### **Special Swim Types**

Certain types of swims require additions or modifications to the standard rules for a one-way swim (Point A to Point B). Swimmers and observers should incorporate the indented portions below into their declared Swim Rules, as appropriate.

### **Multi-Leg Swims**

A multi-leg swim is a swim that reaches one or more intermediate destinations (shores) before the final destination.

The simplest form of a multi-leg swim is a two-way (“double”) channel crossing – a swim from one shore to a different, non-contiguous shore, and then returning to the first shore.

However, a multi-leg swim need not return to the original shore. For example, a swim from Island A to Island B to Island C is also a multi-leg swim, with Island A to Island B as “Leg 1” and Island B to Island C as “Leg 2.”

#### **For a multi-leg swim, add the following two rules:**

1. After finishing one leg of the swim, the swimmer may rest for up to 10 minutes before beginning the next leg. While resting, the swimmer may be supported by a natural land mass but not by people or artificial objects.
2. Timing of the first leg begins when the swimmer enters the water and ends when the swimmer finishes the leg. Timing of subsequent legs begins at the end of the previous leg and includes any break on shore.

### **Circumnavigation Swims**

A circumnavigation swim is a swim around an island (or islands). For a circumnavigation swim, replace the standard Rule #1 (Start & Finish) with the following:

The swim begins when the swimmer enters the water from the island’s shore. If no beach is available on the island, the swimmer may begin the swim by touching and releasing from part of the island’s shore (e.g., cliff face).

The swim finishes when the swimmer swims around the island and then clears the water beyond the starting point (or touches the island’s shore beyond the starting point, if no beach is available).

If access to the island is restricted, the swimmer may start and finish offshore, as long as (s)he “closes the loop” by swimming beyond the starting point, as measured by GPS.

## **Relay Swims**

A swim undertaken by a team of two or more swimmers, swimming in successive turns of a fixed time interval, in a fixed order.

For a relay swim, add the following two rules:

1. Relay teams may choose the number of swimmers (six is standard) and the turn interval (one hour is standard), but the team roster, order, and interval must remain fixed for the duration of the swim.
2. The swimmer exchange takes place in the water, with the new swimmer approaching the previous swimmer from behind. The swimmers are allowed five minutes to complete the exchange, starting from the scheduled exchange time.

## **Stage Swims**

A stage swim consists of two or more “stages,” between which the swimmer rests on shore or on an escort vessel.

For a stage swim, add the following two rules:

Each stage after the first should begin at or behind the finish location of the previous stage.

If the resting location is in open water, the observer must record the GPS coordinates of the stage start and finish locations.

## Local Rule Variations in Marathon Swimming

Rules in marathon swimming date to 1927, when the newly-formed Channel Swimming Association wrote its first regulations for English Channel swims. CSA rules (often known as “Channel Rules”) are the basis for most contemporary marathon swimming rules and standards.

Local adaptations of Channel Rules have produced many slight variations on the original. In the absence of a global governing body with global rules, this has sometimes produced confusion about which rules are truly fundamental, and which are open to local modification.

Interestingly, even the “original” Channel Rules are written as local guidelines, not global guidelines. For example, CSA Rules state that after finishing the first leg of a two-way crossing, “Walking 200m along the shoreline to Cap Gris Nez is not permissible.”

The MSF believes there is a fundamental “spirit” shared by the many variations on Channel Rules, and it aims to codify this global spirit while remaining flexible to local adaptations. The MSF also recognizes existing well-established local marathon swimming rules as legitimate adaptations of the global spirit of the sport.

MSF Rules do not invalidate existing local adaptations. Nor should existing local variations necessarily be applied globally.