



Marvin "Duke" Nelson, Honor Swimmer, United States of America, 1979



Personal Website (None known)

Marvin "Duke" Nelson won 3 Majors: 1930, 1933 and 1934 Canadian National Exhibition. She swam in the Des Moines River in warm and cold water and poor weather. This earned him a specialization in swimming 24 km (15 miles) in frigid, choppy lake waters. In 1930, he won his first Major defeating a field of 173 at the Canadian National Exhibition Marathon Swim in Toronto in 7 hours and 44 minutes, winning US\$10,000 and won again in 1934. He also won the 24 km (15-mile) Lake Michigan swim in Chicago twice, finishing a half-mile ahead of the pack in 1934. In the middle of the American Great Depression, Duke's five professional victories earned him US\$30,000. Confident in his abilities, Duke bet that he would complete the first double-crossing of the English Channel and raised US\$25,000 against 50-to-1 odds that he could accomplish his goal. But he never was able to achieve his goal due to the outbreak of World War II.

[Expanded Biography \(Openwaterpedia\)](#)

[Long Swims Database \(Marathon Swimmers Federation\)](#)