



Cliff Lumsdon, CM, Honor Swimmer, Canada, 1969



Personal Website (None known)

Cliff Lumsdon, CM won 4 Majors: 1956 and 1959 Canadian National Exhibition; and 1956 and 1959 Around Atlantic City. He was one of the world's great marathon swimmers and dominated between 1949 and 1954. He was known for his ability to swim in cold water, once going 51.5 km (32 miles) in 18-plus hours in water temperatures ranging between 8.8° – 11.1°C (48°F – 52°F). Cliff's most famous swim was the 51.5 km (32-mile) Canadian National Exhibition swim in 1955. The 35 starters dropped out with Cliff the only one left in the water; however, after 26 miles, he had also started to tire. The remaining 9.6 km (6 miles) involved lots of media involvement – leading local businessmen to add numerous extra items to the \$15,000 first prize. One offer, involving \$1 for every stroke used on the last 8 km (5 miles), added another \$15,000 to the prize. Other offers involved a hunting lodge and a house. The result was that Cliff was the only finisher, with prizes, gifts (hunting lodge and house) and consumer endorsements that totaled US\$84,000. His cold-water abilities were reflected in his 1956 11 hours and 35 minutes crossing of the Straits of Juan de Fuca between the state of Washington and Vancouver Island in 8.8°C (48°F) water. In the 35 km (22-mile) professional Around-the-Island Marathon Swim in Atlantic City, USA, he finished second in 1954 in 9 hours and 25 minutes, a close second in 9 hours and 56 minutes in 1955, finished first in 9 hours and 51 minutes in 1956, second in 12 hours and 9 minutes in 1958, first in 10 hours and 54 minutes in 1959, second in 10 hours and 40

minutes in 1960, third in 11 hours and 36 minutes in 1961, second in 12 hours and 1 minute in 1962, fourth in 12 hours and 13 minutes in 1963 and fourth in 10 hours and 32 minutes in 1964.

He finished third in 7 hours and 22 minutes in the 37 km (23-mile) la Descente ou remontée du Saguenay in Canada in 1965 and tied for third in 6 hours and 39 minutes in 1966. In the Canadian National Exhibition professional marathon swims in Toronto, he finished fifth in the 16 km (10-mile) 1948 race in 4 hours and 47 minutes, first in the 24 km (15-mile) 1949 race in 7 hours and 54 minutes, first in the 24 km (15-mile) 1950 race in 7 hours and 18 minutes, third in the 16 km (10-mile) 1951 race in 4 hours and 32 minutes, first in the 16 km (10-mile) 1952 race in 4 hours and 24 minutes, first in the 16 km (10-mile) 1953 race in 4 hours and 26 minutes, first in the 51.5 km (32-mile) 1955 race in 19 hours and 48 minutes, fourth in the 15-mile 1961 race in 7 hours and 36 minutes, second in the 24 km (15-mile) 1962 race in 7 hours and 26 minutes, and sixth in the 24 km (15-mile) 1963 race in 7 hours and 58 minutes. In 1949, he won the Lou Marsh Trophy for the outstanding Canadian Athlete of the Year.

The Cliff Lumsdon Award is presented for outstanding achievement in marathon swimming in the sport of Marathon Solo Swimming and for Meritorious Service in Association with Solo Swims of Ontario. In 1972, Lumsdon was elected president of the World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation. He was made a Member of the Order of Canada (CM) in 1982 and is also an inductee in the International Swimming Hall of Fame (2013).

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

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