

Our 34<sup>th</sup> Int. Sri Chinmoy Marathon Swim Rapperswil-Zurich is in the books! On Sunday, Aug. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022, 58 swimmers from 15 nations started the 26 km journey from Rapperswil to Zurich Tiefenbrunnen lido - 29 solos and 10 relays – with some DNS due to Covid after effects. The water was a balmy 25°C, with an overcast sky most of the way and a breeze from the east/north-east that created small uncomfortable waves in some patches, slowing swimmers down. It also pushed boats and swimmers to the middle of the lake by the time they reached the half way cut-off at the ferry in Meilen, where you are supposed to stay close to the shore. Which resulted in 6 solo and 2 relay DNFs – as opposed to 2019, where in spite of a chilly 19°C water temp the success rate was 100 %!

First overall was non-wetsuit lady Kirsten Cameron of NZ (living in NL) in fantastic 6h 56m 05 sec. She was so fast her kajaker could not keep up, but luckily a motor boat with motor problems in the morning got fixed and was able to come to their rescue! Second finisher was wetsuit-swimmer Euan Dow from Glasgow in 7h 27m 44s. Tom Knight from London (Serpentine) and Andrea Marcato (Sri Chinmoy Marathon Team Zurich) finished within 11 seconds of each other in 1st and 2nd place men non-wetsuit in 8h 57m 56s and 8h 58m 07s respectively.

Remarkably, Andrea Marcato is an ultrarunner who is getting ready again for the 26<sup>th</sup> edition of the 3100 mile Self-Transcendence Race in NY in Sept/Oct. (He won the 3100 miles in 2020 and 2021 and ran a number of ultras including a 6 and 10 day race this year). His swim training in preparation of this year's marathon swim – his 5th Lake Zurich finish (non-wetsuit!) - was minimal but smart, including visualisation. Here a short interview with him right after his finish: <https://vimeo.com/737607904>.

Special mention: Chaitanya Tulasi from India– who went on to accomplish his Triple Crown in N.Y. a few days later (which consists of English Channel + Catalina Channel + Manhattan 20 Bridges) - forgot his feeds in the hotel and swam a bit slower than usual, feeding only on water - including drinking some of the very clean lake water!

Other noteworthy swimmers were Margarita Llorens Bagur, a Menorca, Majorca and Ibiza Channel swimmer, and Mostafa Said Zaki from Egypt (wetsuit category, who chose to swim without it in "skins"). He is coached by IMSHOF inductee Mohamed Marouf, whose Zurich lake record of 5h 51m 41s from 1993 remains unbroken – it was current assisted after heavy rains, but still extraordinarily fast.

More infos, including results, photos and video to come: <https://ch.srichinmoyraces.org/z%C3%BCrichsee-schwimmen-marathon-swim/previous-results/2022>

Photos: <https://eurgallery.srichinmoyraces.org/Ch/34-Int-Sri-Chinmoy-Marathon-Schwimmen-2022>

Body weight training, visualisation and mantras - a few "secrets" by ultrarunner and marathon swimmer Andrea Marcato:

*Q: Could you tell us a bit more about your limited swim training for Lake Zurich this year?*

Andrea: This year I swam very little. I guess only 15-18 times, as I travel often. Probably one pool swim every 2 weeks on average. Many sessions were just 1 km, 1,5 km or 2 km- around 20/30'- up to 3,5 km / 1h max. Only a few days before the race I had a 4,7 km training in the pool and a 2,7 km session at the lake.

*Q: How do you keep your swim muscles in the shoulders and upper body, and also your wrist strength - by doing weights or just lifting heavy things at work?*

Andrea: This year I drastically reduced lifting weights (we have a small gym at our enterprise with basic equipment) to avoid bulking up - that would very likely be counterproductive for my running form. Moreover inwardly I felt it's not so useful, therefore I switched to body weight workouts. I have a 100 push up routine before bedtime. Plus I try to stretch often, especially lower back and shoulders muscles. That helps.

*Q: How helpful for a marathon swim is the cardio training you get from long distance running?*

Andrea: Even more helpful than the cardio is to consistently race in ultradistance events, even in a short span of time. That gives you the right mindset.

*Q: Can you tell us a bit more how your meditation practice helps you, apart from staying calm and feeling good before the race?*

Andrea: One or two weeks before the race I try to visualise myself reaching the finish. That was my fifth edition so I have a vivid perception of how it looks like. I keep a photographic memory of the critical points of the race. Intuitively I see some reference points (a church, an harbour, a big tree) and I know approximately how many km I already swam and how many I have still to go. Plus I repeat mantras trying to distract the mind when it gets difficult. It's all a mind game. Concentration, visualization and meditation are the tools which help you to go through. I have been meditating with students of Sri Chinmoy for a few years now. That helps, as the Spiritual Master himself practiced and advocated the philosophy of Self-Transcendence - going beyond one's own limits.

*Q: Did I hear you say, if you trained more you could be 1,5 hours faster in this swim?*

Andrea: You must know I have a big mouth! How can I really know? It was an estimation based on my best finishing time - around 7h40', plus the accumulated experience I get in every edition. But I cannot predict it in advance. Mr. Trapattoni - a well known Italian football coach - once said: "Non dire gatto, se non c'è l'hai nel sacco", which means you can't really boast until it's done. It is so true.

*Q: Is running giving you more joy than swimming, and if so, why? Or is it just this feeling of "inner duty" or "inner call"? Sri Chinmoy often used to say he did not really love weightlifting (he loved running), but it was his inner call that he "had" to do it after his knee injury limited his running. Probably the swim would also be more joyful with more training?*

Andrea: I don't take joy as a main reference for the time being. That doesn't mean I don't derive satisfaction from what I am doing. If I'd rely on Joy I would have probably swam one edition or two. One year you feel a little discomfort before the race, or you didn't manage to train much, and you don't do it. The joy is not there and you don't do it. What works for me is the inner duty. The inner duty pushes me beyond likes and dislikes. That's a kind of military approach. I have to, I have to. *(note. it is also a spiritual attitude to listen to one's inner guidance and go beyond likes and dislikes)*

At the moment I give priority to running long distances, swimming comes second. At the same time I know people's mind is ever changing. As you age, different priorities, different approaches come in. Let's see what's happens in the future ....

*Thank you Andrea!*