



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



Videos: [Swim 1](#)

Marvin "Duke" Nelson won 3 Majors: 1930, 1933 and 1934 Canadian National Exhibition. He trained in the Des Moines River, all year round, which prepared him for success in these 24.1 km races. Duke failed to complete the races in 1928 and 1930. His first victory in 1930 was against a field of 173 in 7 hours and 44 minutes, winning US\$10,000. His victory in 1934 was by 27 minutes. He won the 24 km Lake Michigan race in Chicago twice, 800 meters ahead of the pack in 1934. In the middle of the American Great Depression, these five professional victories earned him US\$30,000.

Duke bet that he would complete the first 2-way 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 \(Marathon Swimmers Federation\)](#)