The Daily News of Open Water Swimming

List Of Butterfly Swims In The Open Water

While it takes male Olympic open water swimmers 1 hour 50 minutes to complete 6.2 miles of swimming in flat-water conditions, it takes a world-class male runner 1 hour 50 minutes to complete 22.5 miles of running in good conditions (at a 2:06 pace).

Therefore, at the highest echelon of the endurance running and swimming world, the world's greatest marathon runners can run 22.5 miles while the world's greatest open water butterflyers can only swim 6.2 miles. In other words, the world-class runners can traverse a distance 3.6 times as far as a world-class swimmer.

But while runners run in the open terrain, swimmers can do butterfly, backstroke, breaststroke, and freestyle in the open water.

And butterfly is the stroke in the open water that most intrigues and fascinates us. Because it remains so extraordinarily difficult to do in the open water. It takes power. It takes guts. It takes strength from the shoulders to the toes. It is dramatic as the body is propelled out and forward in the water. Without a doubt, butterfly is the most unforgiving and difficult of all swimming techniques, both in the pool and in the open water.

Brian Sudhoff, a butterflying open water aficionado, did some calculations on his fellow butterflyers. Based on his calculations below are some of the speediest distance butterflyers in the world and how fast they are in miles per hour (mph) in various swims around the globe. "Therefore, at the highest echelon of the endurance running and swimming world, the world's greatest marathon runners can run 22.5 miles while the world's greatest open water butterflyers can only swim 6.2 miles. In other words, the world-class runners can traverse a distance 3.63 times as far as world class butterfly open water swimmers," explains Sudhoff. "At the bottom line, it seems to me that when doing butterfly in the open water, the largest distance for a "marathon class" swim is more like 5 kilometers by speed and effort based on the performances of the very best."

Sample of Fast Butterfly Open Water Swims

1. Julie Brador: 3.61 mph (4.95 kph) in 2011 Manhattan Island Marathon Swim, 28.5 miles (46.0 km) in 2:28
2. Hector Ramirez Ballestero: 2.67 mph (4.29 kph) at the 2012 Rio de Janeiro, 3.11 miles (5 km) in 1:10
3. Dan Prossarsky: 2.45 mph (3.95 kph) at the 2013 Extreme North Dakota Watersports Endurance Test, 27 miles (43 km) in 1:30
4. Sylvain Estadiou: 2.31 mph (3.72 kph) at the 2013 Lee Swim, 24 miles (3.1 km) in 0:22:26
5. Gianni Golino: 2.30 mph (3.71 kph) in Strait of Messina in 1977, 1.99 miles (3.2 km) in 0:14:49
6. Sylvain Estadiou: 1.55 mph (2.53 kph) in Pacific Sea in 2010, 3.73 miles (6 km) in 1:55
7. Sylvain Estadiou: 1.94 mph (3.12 kph) in 2012 Lake Delisi in Gottingen (German lake), 3.17 miles (5 km) in 1:35
8. Gianni Golino: 1.93 mph (3.11 kph) in Strait of Messina - 2AM in 1977, 4.50 miles (6.5 km) in 2:23:56
9. Dan Prossarsky: 1.86 mph (3.00 kph) in 2012 Extreme North Dakota Watersports Endurance Test, 27 miles (43 km) in 1:30
10. Sylvain Estadiou: 1.86 mph (2.99 kph) in Sandycove Island in 2013, 13.92 miles (22.4 km) in 7:30
11. Julie Brador: 1.85 mph (2.97 kph) in Lough Erne in 2008, 10.50 miles (16.89 km) in 5:41
12. Hector Ramirez Ballestero: 1.83 mph (2.94 kph) in Radeaux in 2012, 5.76 miles (9.27 km) in 3:01
13. Graham East: 1.52 mph (2.45 kph) in Lake Bled in 1992, 2.35 miles (5.93 km) in 1:47
14. Francesco Marzario: 1.70 mph (2.59 kph) in the 1992 Strait of Messina - 2AM, 4.50 miles (6.5 km) in 2:36:34
15. Hector Ramirez Ballestero: 1.72 mph (2.77 kph) in Izu Izu in 2011, 5.59 miles (8.98 km) in 3:15
16. Julie Brador: 1.72 mph (2.76 kph) in Lake Windermere in 1991, 10.50 miles (16.9 km) in 8:57:3