

Expansion comes to the National YMCA Competitive Aquatic Program—“A Long Course Championship!”

The year was 1985 and it was just 15 years after the 1st Combined Men's and Women's National Championships which was held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida in 1971. The National YMCA Short Course Championship Meets were flourishing—perhaps the largest National meets in the country. The time was right for expansion, but what type of meet, when and where it would be held, and finally who would be the meet director!

The vision for a new National YMCA Championship Meet came about in a strange way. It was near the end of the Short Course National Meet held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, in April of 1985. Ed Henn, a member of the National YMCA Swimming and Diving Committee, approached the then chairman of our National YMCA Swimming and Diving Committee, Gene Keltner, with a suggested idea or concept for a new meet. It was to have a combined National YMCA Long Course Age Group Championship Meet and a National YMCA Long Course Masters Meet and make it a timed final championship.

Gene thought the idea had merit and told Ed that he would take his proposal to the winter meeting of the National Executive Committee meeting and would let him know the outcome. At that meeting of the executive committee (**Gene Keltner Chairman, Gloria Summers Vice-Chairman/ Administration, Peggy Kelso Vice-Chairman/ Program & Standing Committees, Paul Atkinson Vice-Chairman/Field Representatives, Jim Stocker Secretary, Lynn Rickert Treasurer, Joe Rogers Chairman Emeritus, Archie Harris, Bill Daisley, Bob Mowerson, Clyde Truttmann Members at Large**), there was much discussion, both pro and con. The final decision was made to host a National YMCA Long Course Senior (12 and Over) Championship Meet in 1986 at the Countryside YMCA in Lebanon, Ohio, with Ed Henn, as Meet Director. The Countryside YMCA had an 8 lane outdoor pool and an indoor pool for diving which was located just north of Cincinnati, Ohio. Ed was quite honored to be the meet director for the 1st National YMCA Long Course Championship Meet but was disappointed that it was not an Age Group Meet.

Ed and the officials chairman, Al Dahl, began working on the newly established meet immediately upon his return from Florida. In checking the dimensions of the outdoor pool facility at the Countryside YMCA, it was discovered that they were incorrect and the meet had to be moved to a new location.

The first YMCA National Long Course Swimming Meet was held on August 6-9, 1986 at the Keating Natatorium on the campus of St. Xavier High School in Cincinnati, Ohio. The Keating Pool had no diving facilities and as a result the diving was conducted at the Countryside YMCA on August 6 & 7th in Lebanon, Ohio. Team registrations were due by June 15th and the entry deadline was July 25, 1986. The Championship headquarters was at the Radisson Inn, 11440 Chester Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45246. Team registrations were held August 5-6, 1986.

Key Officials for the meet:

Meet Director/Manager:	Ed Henn
Officials Chairman:	Alan & Barbara Dahl
Computer Chairman:	Jim & Mary Lynn Byrne
Auto-Timing Chairman:	Claudia Multer
Scoring Chairman:	Dottie Henn
Admissions Chairman:	Paul & Jan Atkinson

Notes of interest concerning this 1st Long Course meet :

1. The 1986 Long Course Meet was the 1st National YMCA Championship Meet to have the auto-timing system directly connected to the computer. It was a Colorado Timing System which was owned by the Southwest Ohio Cluster YMCA Swimming League.
2. An 8 lane Colorado scoreboard used in the meet was borrowed from the Beaver Creek YMCA, thanks to Director Paul Atkinson, and was mounted by Al Dahl, a lay volunteer from the Blue Ash YMCA.
3. To have triple lane lines for the meet, extra lines were borrowed from YMCA's in the Southwest Ohio Cluster YMCA Swim League.
4. All deck officials used in the meet were YMCA certified officials from the Southwest Ohio YMCA Swim League.

Additional Notes from Ed Henn:

Ed Henn was the meet director for this championship meet for the 5 years:

1986 Keating Natatorium	Cincinnati, Ohio
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1988 Keating Natatorium	Cincinnati, Ohio
1989 Cleveland State University	Cleveland, Ohio
1990 Eastern Michigan University	Ypsilanti, Michigan

In mid 1990 Gene Keltner, Paul Atkinson and Ed Henn visited Nashville, TN. They contacted Opryland, various hotels in the area, the Tracy Caulkins Natatorium, and Vanderbilt University and made arrangements to bring the National YMCA Long Course Championship to Nashville for the next 3 years (1991, 1992 & 1993). Directorship for these meets was turned over to Peggy Kelso.

National YMCA Long Course Swimming and Diving Championships **First Meet held August 6-9, 1986 Cincinnati, Ohio**

There were 500 athletes from 54 YMCA's that attended this 1st Long Course National YMCA Championship Meet. Teams came from as far away as California, Maine, and Florida to participate in this event.