

Brenda Fisher Beats Marilyn Bell Record

Brenda Fisher, from Grimsby, England, cut 2 hours and 2 minutes off Marilyn Bell's record swim time by crossing Lake Ontario in 18 hours and 53 minutes yesterday.

When Brenda half crawled, half bounced ashore at the eastern tip of Cherry Beach, near the Dr. Richard L. Hearn Hydro-Electric plant, she added a further claim to her reputation as the world's number one woman swimmer.

Before her second attempt to conquer Lake Ontario—she was thwarted last year—Miss Fisher had been acclaimed as fastest woman across the English Channel, and fastest woman to complete the 29-mile Nile River swim. She is now the fastest person to have crossed Lake Ontario.

When she bubbled out of the muddy, surging stretch of lake along Cherry Beach, she scrambled back into the water, thrusting aside attempts by lifeguards who came to assist her, and made for her companion boat.

She looked as though she had merely been out for a brisk mid-summer morning's walk. When she was finally landed, at the

foot of Spadina Ave., and walked to a waiting ambulance, she looked up and grinned at reporters' questions.

"I feel fine, absolutely fine."

And she did, too, except for eyes bloodshot from the long grind in the water.

It was the 41st attempt within the past two years to beat the lake. Since Marilyn Bell's 1954 victory, only John Jaremey, 36-year-old Toronto steamfitter and Brenda have stroked across the 32 miles of water.

Brenda Fisher's success was a triumph shared by her 70-year-old coach, Herbert McNally. As she waded into the shallows just east of Cherry Beach at 5:47 yesterday afternoon, he said "Ec, it's great. 'Tis 'n all."

Which was a north country swimming up of Miss Fisher's tremendous finishing burst. She jumped into the mouth of the Niagara River at 10:45 p.m. Sunday and plowed through rain, darkness and intense sun with a rolling, steady crawl stroke of 52 to the minute.

She stopped for snacks of tepid tea, well loaded with sugar, and biscuits. Her coach fed her with sugar cubes and she never ap-

peared to be tired or suffering from sickness or cramps.

At 4 p.m. yesterday, as the vanguard of a 1,500 crowd gathered at Cherry Beach, she had less than two miles to go and she had been swimming for 17 hours 13 minutes.

She began to pause more frequently, often lapsing into a strength-conserving breast-stroke or paddle.

She seemed confused. She kept shouting to her coach, "Where, where?" as the strong wind drove her off course.

McNally had headed her toward the Eastern Gap lighthouse, where Jaremey touched—Marilyn Bell landed near the CNE grounds—but she was forced off course.

At 4:40 p.m. she had one mile left to swim and the waves were chopping into two and three-foot high obstacles.

Passengers aboard a surrounding flotilla of 40 yachts and small boats were shouting encouragement and sirens blew as she started her finishing spurt, which brought her in only a few minutes before a torrential thunderstorm.

"I'm going to have a long nap now," she said.

CNE grounds

Brenda Tired But Happy Over Record

Brenda Fisher, the fisherman's daughter from Grimsby, England, has been a swimmer for 21 years and her present coach, Herb McNally, a vigorous 70, has been her instructor throughout that time.

fisherman's daughter

Brenda, now 28, started as a speed swimmer at the age of seven. After the Second World War she switched to distance swimming, saying it was a tribute to her brother, who was killed while serving with the RAF.

Brenda, who is Mrs. Patrick Johnston in private life, has conquered the English Channel twice. Her husband is a well-known English soccer player.

In 1951 Brenda set a Women's record for swimming the Channel from France to England. Her time was 12 hours 43 minutes, faster by 40 minutes than Florence Chadwick's earlier crossing.

"That was my proudest moment as a swimmer," she said. "It brought me a command performance before the Royal family and resulted in my being named Great Britain's leading sportswoman of 1952." She later swam the Channel again in 1954.

She also holds the women's record for the 29-mile River Nile crossing, another favorite target for swimmers. Last April she did it in 12 hours 11 minutes.

Now she has a third record. Beaten by Lake Ontario last year by rough water, she achieved her ambition yesterday, completing the 32-mile distance from Niagara-on-the-Lake to Toronto in 18 hours 50 minutes. That chopped two hours six minutes off Marilyn Bell's time.

"I'm very proud to have trained the queen of the English Channel, the queen of the Nile and now the queen of Lake Ontario," said trainer McNally.