

GIRL IN LONG SWIM TO CONEY ISLAND

Rose Pitonof, 17 Years Old,
Reaches Goal After Cover-
ing Twenty-one Miles.

IN WATER EIGHT HOURS

Forced to Battle with Adverse Tides at
Start and Finish—Girl Receives
Great Demonstration.

Miss Rose Pitonof, the seventeen-year-old swimming marvel from Dorchester, Mass., added another wonderful performance to her record yesterday when she successfully negotiated the distance between East Twenty-sixth Street, Manhattan, and Steeplechase Pier, Coney Island. The distance between the two points is seventeen miles, but it is estimated that Miss Pitonof covered twenty-one miles in yesterday's swim, as it was necessary to vary her course at times in order that she might have the benefit of the current and tides. She dove into the water at 9:20 o'clock yesterday morning and finished the long swim at 5:27 o'clock yesterday afternoon. She was in the water eight hours and seven minutes.

Miss Pitonof is the first girl to accomplish this most difficult task, and her performance yesterday outclassed anything ever attempted by a girl swimmer in Eastern waters. Last year she succeeded in covering the difficult course from Charlestown to Boston Light, a feat seldom accomplished by man and never before or since by a woman. Following yesterday's performance it was announced that Miss Pitonof would claim the woman's long-distance swimming championship of the world and would defend the title against all comers. It is probable that Miss Pitonof will attempt the heretofore unaccomplished swim from the Battery to Sandy Hook in a few weeks.

Coney Island never held a more enthusiastic or demonstrative crowd than that which welcomed the girl swimmer at Steeplechase Pier yesterday afternoon. From the time she first made her appearance around Norton's Point thousands gathered along the shore to watch her progress and cheer her on to victory, and all bathing was suspended for practically the last hour of her swim. At Steeplechase Park the crowd swarmed on and around the pier to such an extent that the attendants were totally unable to hold the people in check, and it required ten minutes from the time the girl walked along the sandy beach at the end of her long swim until she was in her dressing room, less than 200 feet away. This was accomplished only by the efforts of a flying wedge of attendants, who forcibly worked their way through the human wall of thousands trying to get a glimpse of Miss Pitonof. A lane about twenty feet in width had been arranged for her arrival, but just as Miss Pitonof reached the point where she was expected to turn in, the crowd of bathers swarmed around her, and she was compelled to swim under the pier to complete her long trip.

Upward of 200 bathers and about fifty craft of various sizes completely hid Miss Pitonof from the view of the crowd when Steeplechase was reached. They began to follow her just after she turned Norton's Point, and as each beach was passed the number increased. About a half-mile before the pier was reached the crowd of swimmers and oarsmen became so great that it was necessary to send an extra boat into their midst to do patrol duty and force the sightseers to give the swimmer sufficient room to complete her task. She was going against a strong tide at the time, and the crowd which surrounded her tended to make her work all the more difficult. At every bathing pavilion along the Coney Island shore hundreds of bathers cheered her on. It is estimated that 50,000 people viewed the swim from the time Miss Pitonof turned Norton's Point until she finished up at Steeplechase.

Miss Pitonof was guided during the long swim by Commodore William J. Curran of the United States Volunteer Life-Saving Corps, who gave her the benefit of his forty years' experience with the tides and currents along the Manhattan to Coney Island course. Commodore Curran showed the way in a rowboat, and he manned the oars throughout the entire twenty-one miles. In the boat with him was Adolf Pitonof, a brother of the girl and a swimmer of considerable ability, who was ready at all times to go to his sister's aid if necessary. He left the boat and swam along with his sister for about two miles just before the finish.

The start was made from the pier at the foot of East Twenty-sixth Street at 9:20 o'clock yesterday morning. At that time a strong flood tide was flowing, but Miss Pitonof's only chance of success lay in bucking the tide at the start of the race, when she was strong, and thus have less to contend with at the other end of the course. A swim over this distance necessarily entailed considerable work against the tide, and the plan outlined and followed in yesterday's swim was the only one offering even remote chances of success. Added to the natural advantages of such a plan was the necessity for strong swimming and wonderful endurance, and Miss Pitonof showed both. At the finish of the swim she appeared in no way fatigued, and her only nourishment was a cup of coffee and a chicken sandwich. During her long stay in the water she took no nourishment of any kind.

Bucking against the adverse flood tide Miss Pitonof experienced much difficulty for two and one-half hours after the start. Along the Manhattan shore she found the tide the stiffest, and it held her back to such an extent that it began to look as if a premature start would weaken her and destroy any chance she might have of success. No less than six times during her swim down the Manhattan shore she was compelled to swim under the piers along the shore, as the rough water and adverse tide on the outside made progress practically impossible. Four times her guiding boat led the way under piers, as the girl did not care to make the trip alone, but under the other two piers she went alone. Her swim from the starting point to the Battery was much slower than over any other like distance of the long course.

The Williamsburg Bridge was reached at 11:10, or almost two hours after the start, and the Brooklyn Bridge was not reached until an hour later. It was between these two points that Miss Pitonof experienced the first of the ebb tide, and the relief was very apparent. Before the ebb tide set in the girl was compelled to change a few times from the breast stroke, her favorite style of propelling herself through the water, to an overhand stroke. Once in the grasp of the favorable tide, Miss Pitonof resumed the

breast-stroke, and never changed until she was forced to buck against the tide along the Coney Island shore.

The swim to the Battery required a little more than three hours, this stage of the journey being reached at 12:30 o'clock. Miss Pitonof was swimming strongly at this stage, and fifteen minutes later she was opposite Governors Island. She reached a point opposite the Crescent Athletic Club at Bay Ridge at 2:10 o'clock, was opposite Fort Hamilton twenty minutes later, and passed Fort Wadsworth at 2:50 o'clock. At this point it was necessary for her to go considerably out of the course she had been following and swim toward the Staten Island shore, in order to get the benefit of the currents. She was opposite Hoffman's Island at 3:28 and reached Norton's Point at 3:47 o'clock. This was the place where Miss Pitonof was forced to give up last year when she attempted to swim from the New York Yacht Club station at East Twenty-third Street to Steeplechase Pier. On that occasion she was, in the water five hours and eight minutes before the tide became too strong for her.

Miss Pitonof was going so strongly when she turned into the final stretch that success seemed assured. The tide was still flowing in her favor and the goal of her ambition loomed up in the distance, but apparently near enough to encourage her. But the most difficult part of her task lay between her and victory. She would soon be called upon to buck another flood tide, and her long swim had sapped enough vitality to make her far less able to fight against the tide than had been the case during her early morning exertions. It seemed only a short distance, but as the tide turned and became stronger it began to look as if she would be denied her prize with less than a mile to cover. It was a slow swim over the stretch of a little more than a mile, and at times Miss Pitonof appeared to be almost stationary in spite of her steady strokes. That last strip of water required one hour and forty minutes of hard swimming.

During a large part of the swim Miss Pitonof was accompanied by Alois Anderle, holder of the long-distance swimming championship of Austria and one of the few who have successfully made the distance from Charlestown to Boston Light. Mr. Anderle, who is now a resident of New York, will make another attempt to make the Boston Light swim next Sunday, and he had arranged for a swim to Steeplechase Pier from Thirty-second Street yesterday as his final bit of training. The boats which were to accompany him failed to arrive and he was delayed until it was too late to start and think of success. So he decided to follow Miss Pitonof in a launch, which sailed from the pier at East Thirty-second Street at noon.

When about a mile from the girl swimmer at 1:30 o'clock Mr. Anderle decided to swim with the girl, and he dived from the launch. He is a strong swimmer, but she was going so strongly at the time that it was almost two hours later that he overtook her off Fort Wadsworth. He went into the water opposite the foot of Thirty-ninth Street, South Brooklyn. Mr. Anderle swam alongside Miss Pitonof until she was less than a mile from her goal, when he announced that he did not care to take away any of the glory which belonged to her, and climbed back into the launch.

Charles McColgan, a life saver from Carson Beach, Boston, and a friend of Miss Pitonof, was among a number of followers on an auxiliary in charge of Charles Farl, who managed the swim for Miss Pitonof. When near Fourteenth Street, Manhattan, Mr. McColgan dived overboard for the purpose of swimming beside the girl, but suffered a cramp and had to be picked up by the boat. The girl went to his assistance, but her efforts were not needed.