

Swimmers test endurance

BY SUSAN JARVIS
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Master swimmers from all over Arkansas took the state's biggest water challenge Saturday and swam 10,000 meters in the pool of their choice in the Marquis de Sade 10K swimming endurance test.

In case your mental computer can't figure it fast enough, that means they swam 6.2 miles. Even close family members were led to question the stability of the swimmers.

"I respect his physical condition," Douglas Hoffman said of his brother, Jeff, as Jeff climbed out of the Bess Chisum Stephens YWCA pool, "not his mental condition."

However, Jeff's lunacy in doing the 10K swim was overmatched by Leslie Dudley's. She ran 20 miles in the Six Hour Moonlight Track run at Benton Friday night and then jumped in a cold pool at the

Little Rock Racquet Club Saturday morning for the six-mile swim.

"It's so cold I can't stand it," Dudley said, hugging herself. "I'm stiff this morning. I think it's the weather.

"I'm going to do the whole thing. It just seems like the thing to do."

No one seems able to explain just why they took on such a challenge. Swimmers in various parts of the state, in other parts of the nation and in at least one other country are doing the distance where they are and mailing in their times. A complete list of results will be released October 15.

But winning and losing really aren't the motivation for these athletes. They are proving something to themselves and having a good time.

"I'm doing this for fun," said Mark Hartnett, a flight engi-

neer at Little Rock Air Force Base. "I'd like to beat Lori (Huff, who did it in 2:57), but I'll settle for under 3:05."

Hartnett's time was 3:10.

"It's pretty good so far," said Jeff Hoffman as he worked toward the halfway point. "I got leg cramps at about 2½ miles, but I'm okay now."

Another YWCA swimmer, Craig Anderson, 48, of Little Rock also reported cramping at about the halfway point. He wasn't quite sure why he was doing it, either.

John Ohnemus, 32, of Little Rock said he swims as part of an unusual training program.

"I cross train," he said. "I also play basketball. I've got some tightness in my shoulders and a little leg cramping comes and goes. But I'm going to do the whole thing."



Arkansas Democrat/Susan Jarvis

TAKING A TURN — Mark Hartnett of Sherwood takes a breath before plunging back into the water. He was one of nine swimmers who completed the Marquis de Sade 10K Swimming Endurance Test in the central Arkansas area.