



BACKGROUNDER

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WHY LONG BEACH IS THE AQUATIC CAPITAL OF AMERICA

LONG BEACH, Calif. (November 2011) – In a nation filled with great watersports cities, only one has dared to bill itself as The Aquatic Capital of America.

And why not? With its temperate year-round climate, ideal off-shore sailing waters, protected Marine Stadium competition zone, and diverse population filled with active athletes and beachgoers, Long Beach is the envy of seaside cities across the country.

In October 2008, the Long Beach City Council approved a community-driven proposal to declare Long Beach the “Aquatic Capital of America.” The proposal was initiated by a committee led by Tom Shadden, a longtime Long Beach resident, businessman and sailor.

For Shadden, creating the Aquatic Capital moniker was a means to present the city’s countless aquatic activities to the public in an integrated way that has the impact of seeing Long Beach as a major aquatic center with sports and events in and around the water.

Long Beach has produced an incredible list of Olympians, world champions, and world record holders in aquatics ranging from diving, to swimming and water polo, to rowing and sailing. Extend the range of aquatics from the water’s edge to the sand, and there is no greater athlete in the Olympic sport of beach volleyball than two-time Gold Medal winner Misty May-Treanor. Born and raised in Long Beach, it’s the city Misty still calls home.

The true sailboat match-racing concept was initiated in Long Beach and the event that it spawned has grown into the internationally recognized Congressional Cup. An array of world champion sailors has experienced the challenges of the Congressional Cup and used the competition to hone their skills for the America’s Cup.

The Port of Long Beach, considered by many to be the “gateway to the Pacific,” is not only one of the busiest shipping ports in the world but it is also an economic engine for the entire Southern California region. The Port’s stewardship of the environment and service to the aquatic community is unequalled.

Consider the city’s aquatic assets and facilities:

- Queen Mary
- Aquarium of the Pacific
- Rainbow Harbor
- U.S. Sailing Center
- Leeway Sailing and Aquatics Center
- Belmont Plaza Olympic Pool
- Marine Stadium
- Two municipal-owned marinas
- Three City pools serving over 200,000 annual users
- 11 miles of beaches
- Wetlands and bird sanctuaries
- Sea water desalination plant
- Aqualink water taxi service
- Catalina Express
- International cruise ship terminal

And the year-round sports and notable aquatic activities that have called Long Beach home:

- 1932 Olympic Games - Rowing
- 1984 Olympic Games - Yachting
- 1968 U.S. Olympic Rowing Trials
- 2008 U.S. Olympic Swimming Trials
- Pac-10 Swimming & Diving Championships
- Big West Swimming & Diving Championships
- Congressional Cup
- Transpac Yacht Race home port
- Long Beach Sprint Nationals
- International 10K Swim circuit
- Sea Festival
- Dragon boat regattas
- Swimming & diving
- Sailing & power boating
- Rowing
- Para sailing & wind surfing
- Kayaking
- Scuba diving
- Fishing
- Outrigger canoe races
- Water polo
- Professional and amateur beach volleyball
- Stand-up paddling
- Hydro bikes

With the support of longtime city residents who support recreational water activities in the City of Long Beach – including the vice president of FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation), the international governing body of swimming, diving, water polo, synchronized swimming and open water swimming – the committee has evolved into a community-based, non-profit organization, The Long Beach Aquatic Capital of America Foundation.

The Aquatic Capital Foundation's membership includes boaters and rowers, kayakers, swimmers, divers and water poloists, marine enthusiasts, and professionals who commit thousands of hours annually organizing and promoting aquatic sports and events in Long Beach. The organization's goals are to communicate and promote Long Beach as an aquatic destination for business, education and sports on a local, national and international basis, and to help make Long Beach youth "water safe."

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