

EXPERIMENTAL IS PASSIONATE

MEET THE RECORD BREAKERS

Inside the minds of two diving champions



HERBERT NISCH
“The Deepest Man on Earth” with a No Limit freedive to 253m/831ft, Nisch has set 33 world records in all of the freediving disciplines.

“The most powerful lesson I have learnt is that there are no limits to what your mind and body can achieve. It is a pity that kids never learn this at school. They should be learning how to use their bodies and their minds in the most efficient way to realise whatever they want. Human beings manage to live their whole lives without understanding anything about themselves.”

How has breaking records changed you?

“Breaking records made me understand that everything is possible in life. Not just in sports, but also in healing and in everyday life. Once you understand how your body functions, you can use this knowledge constantly.

“After my last No Limit world record (253m/831ft) in 2012, I incurred severe decompression sickness. Its onset takes a while. About 15 minutes after the dive, while recompressing underwater on pure oxygen, I felt it was coming. Three hours later I was comatose in a hyperbaric hospital. The diagnosis was severe DCS, resulting in multiple brain strokes. The prognosis was that I would be a “wheelchair-bound basket-case” for the rest of my life.

“I was not going to accept that. And no matter how severe the limitations of my body and mind were, I was determined to snap out of it. Eventually I threw all (Western) medicine away and dismissed myself out of long-term care, and started my own healing and fitness regime. I used all the knowledge I had about my own body and mind to get well again. It was a long road and very challenging at times.

I got myself out of that wheelchair, and got my brain back into shape as well. In the summer of 2014 I have been deep freediving again, just to



see how I would feel at depth. Underwater I feel as if nothing ever happened. On land I still have some challenges with balance and coordination sometimes. The doctors call it a “miracle”, but there is nothing miraculous about it. It is all about knowing and understanding yourself. Everyone can learn this. The miracle is the human body and mind itself.”

What advice would you have for anyone out there who aiming to break a world record?

“1) Listen, learn and innovate. Listen to others and to your own body. Learn from them and from

yourself. Then become wise about your body and mind, and find ways to get the best out of both of them. If you follow the path of others, you can only be as good as them. Therefore be innovative, and find your own way, a better one.

2) Visualize what you want to achieve, believe in it, and do it.

3) Keep mentally and physically fit. You can only break records if you are in top-shape.

4) Know that there are no limits and that you can achieve whatever you want to.

5) Remember that you are your own master, don't let anyone tell you otherwise.”



SEAN MCGAHERN
With three world records, master of endurance Mcgahern has spent some incredible lengths of time underwater, but is about to undertake the most intense challenge of his life.

“Every record breaking dive I've done has had its memorable moments, like changing out of dry suit under water, and once waking up under water and finding a very large octopus watching me sleep.”

What are some of the challenges you've faced in your career as a record breaker?

“I dropped out of school at the age of 14 as a result of being dyslexic, but that hasn't stopped me from breaking three world records.

“I'd broken the record for the Longest Open Warm Water Sea Dive in 2009, spending 27 hours 35 minutes underwater. Then, in 2011, I started training for a new Guinness World Record for the Longest Cold Water Open Sea Dive. But, shortly after entering the water, a storm of force five to six winds blew across the island, and forced us to abort the attempt one hour and 10 minutes short of the record.

“I finally succeeded in 2012. Eleven hours and 30 minutes into the dive, I began to feel the cold. But by 11 hours and 45 minutes in the dive, I already knew that I was the new world record holder, and, even though I was aiming at 15 hours, the team and I agreed that I had endured. I emerged out of the 14°C water 12 hours and 34 minutes later, breaking the record that stood at 11 hours and 46 minutes.

“In October 2013 I again broke the world record for the Longest Warm Water Scuba Dive, this time by spending 49 hours and 56 minutes underwater, in aid of the charity Inspire, which



provides therapeutic, education and leisure services to disabled adults and children. Despite suddenly being hit by strong winds, currents, surge and metre-high waves only five hours into the dive, we accepted this as an even bigger challenge.

“This year I'm training for the biggest dive of my life, in aid of shark awareness with Project Aware. I will try to spend 10 days in a shark tank at a depth of four meters – a feat that should break all previous records by a mile.”

What lessons have you learned along the way?

“One, you have to make sure making sure that both you and the team are 100-percent ready logistically and mentally. Two, you can't break a record alone and, at the end of the day, you need your safety team, they don't need you, its vital to listen to them and plan around them, not around me. And three don't be record driven, know when to stop know when to give up or it will be your last!”

How does it feel to break a world record?

“It's overwhelming, especially being greeted by all my friends and family. It's a sense of immense achievement gratified that my dives have helped someone else around the world. Someone once asked me why I do it. I do it to raise awareness; I do it to raise funds for charities. I do it because others cant.”