

Cookie Thelen Memory

I have quite a few memories of the Marine Stadium but the most exciting were the water ski shows. I was part of the Miami Water Ski Club. We had a ski team, and we skied everywhere, including Cypress Gardens. There were 6-7 women; 5-6 men, our own drivers and boats. We had probably some of the best show jumpers in the world at that time.

I skied at the Marine Stadium in the late 1970s-early 1980s. We were often part of other events, such as the Orange Bowl Jumping Tournament. We would bring our boats and put on full shows-we did flags, pyramids, jumping, doubles routines, and I soloed by myself. Water ski shows at the Marine Stadium were among the most beautiful shows you could imagine, because with the City in the background, the setting was so spectacular.

But it was difficult. The Orange Bowl Regatta was usually held in January, and the weather was often cold and windy. We were not used to this. Landings were a little rugged because there was a lot of coral and oolitic limestone at the edge of the Basin. You would come flying in and land and it was brutal on your feet.

Not only did I ski, but my girls skied as well. They looked like little mice as they skied. While shows usually went off without a hitch, occasionally there were problems. I was once at the top of a three level pyramid, and someone got a little askew underneath. The pyramid collapsed and I tumbled into the water. But I wasn't hurt-after all, it was just water.

After the shows, there was a place underneath the stands where we dressed and had quite a few refreshments-and took care of our cut feet. But it was a terrific place to put on a show.