



The Open Water Almanac

When you see hundreds of swimmers competing in the open water, it is easy to take for granted the great progress of this awesome sport. Yet open water swimming has come a long way in relatively short time to enjoy the phenomenal worldwide enthusiasm that this great sport receives today.

Introducing...

A Comprehensive Collection for the Entire Open Water Community!

Are you an true Open Water enthusiast?
If so, then you will appreciate the value of this compilation!

The ***Open Water Almanac*** is a collection of resources and documents developed, edited and updated by Steven Munatones as a gift to the Open Water Community. But before we see what is actually inside the Open Water Almanac, let's meet the author...



Steven Munatones

About the Author:

Steven Munatones has served as the USA Swimming National Open Water Swimming Team coach at the 2001, 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007 World Swimming Championships and 2006, 2007, 2009 and 2010 national team camps. Write for Swimming World Magazine, Swimming Australia Magazine and Competitor Magazine. International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame inductee and board member. Member of the FINA Technical Open Water Swimming Committee and USA Swimming Open Water Swimming Committee. 1982 World Long Distance Swimming Champion (25K). NBC Olympics Commentator for the 2008 Olympic 10K Marathon Swim in Beijing. Created the Open Water Swimming Dictionary and World's Top 100 Open Water Swims. Prepared open water swimming materials used by NBC, USA Swimming, Beijing Olympic Committee, Wall Street Journal, USA Today and National Geographic Magazine. Did 5 unprecedented solo swims over 30K in Asia and several pro marathon swims in Canada, Mexico and Atlantic City. Serve as Technical Swimming Delegate for the Special Olympics and 2011 World Games and advisor to race directors in the USA, Brazil, Greece, Mexico and Japan. Board member of Swim Free.

Table of Contents



The Open Water Almanac

This comprehensive and authoritative collection consists of the following documents:

• Open Water Swimming Dictionary – WOWSA*	3
• Open Water Swimming Circumnavigations – WOWSA	26
• Open Water Swimming Books and Movies – WOWSA	36
• Longest Solo Swims in the World – WOWSA	43
• Higher Math for Open Water Swimmers – WOWSA	44
• Is Open Water Swimming Nearing A Tipping Point – WOWSA	45
• America's Top 10 Most Competitive Open Water Races – WOWSA	46
• World's Top 100 Open Water Swims – WOWSA	50
• Open Water Swimming Haikus and Poems – WOWSA	79
• Open Water Swimming Products – WOWSA	80
• America's Top 50 Open Water Swims – WOWSA	88
• Outstanding Open Water Swimming Websites – WOWSA	103
• Five Oceans – WOWSA	107
• Open Water Swimming Clubs, Teams and Organizations – WOWSA	108
• Four Fundamental Feeding Steps – WOWSA	117
• The Socratic Method in the Open Water – WOWSA	119
• Ocean's Seven – WOWSA	121
• Fears of the Open Water – WOWSA	125
• 50 Great Open Water Locations in the Americas – WOWSA	126
• Where Are Open Water Races Conducted – WOWSA	132
• International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame – WOWSA	133
• Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in the Open Water – WOWSA	135
• New Open Water Swims Around The World – WOWSA	136
• An Open Water Swimming Hero – WOWSA	141
• Open Water Swimming Ecosystem – WOWSA	142
• Pyramid of Open Water Success – WOWSA	143
• Inner Thoughts of a Marathon Swimming Coach – WOWSA	144
• Open Water Swimming Over The Next Century – WOWSA	149
• Triathletes and Open Water Swimmers as Endurance Cousins – WOWSA	153
• Swim Near The Rocks – WOWSA	158
• Eco-swimming Staying Green in Blue Waters – WOWSA	162
• Open Water Swimming Trivia – WOWSA	164
• Cold-water Swimming – WOWSA	166
• A Champion in the Pool and Open Water – WOWSA	168

*WOWSA: Worldwide Open Water Swimming Association - <http://www.worldopenwater.com/>

Open Water Swimming Dictionary



This American English open water swimming dictionary was first written in 2008 and was used at the 2008 Beijing Olympics and by NBC Olympics and USA Swimming. The Open Water Dictionary includes the definitions, etymologies, synonyms and examples of numerous terms used in the sport of open water swimming.

Abandonment (noun): 1. Termination of an event prior to its completion due to safety considerations. A race may be abandoned and restarted at a later time due to unsafe conditions on the course. *When the weather worsened and the waves reached over ten feet, the referee called for abandonment of the race.* 2. A termination by a swimmer due to injury, exhaustion or time limits.

Acclimate (verb): To become accustomed to warmer or colder water temperatures, wind chop and waves, and various other conditions before an open water race or solo swim. *The swimmer began to swim in colder water in order to acclimate for the English Channel.*

Acclimatization (noun): The process of adapting to warmer or colder water temperatures, wind chop and waves, and various other conditions prior to an open water race or solo swim. *Acclimatization is an important part of preparing for the warm water conditions expected at the Olympics 10K Marathon Swim.*

After drop (noun): The continued fall of body temperatures during re-warming after hypothermia thought to endanger the heart by further cooling due to the cold blood returning from the periphery. However, afterdrop is not always observed depending on the circumstances. *The doctor was concerned about afterdrop even after the swimmer had been pulled from the ocean and treated in the medical tent.*

Age-group start (noun): When the swimmers are divided by specific ages at the start (as opposed to seeded starts or mass starts). *Swimmers between the ages of 20-39 gathered for a start near the pier.* [Origin: bef. 1150; (v.) ME *steren* to rush out, leap (c. MHG *sterzen*); r. OE *styrtan* (attested once), c. G *stürzen*; (n.) ME *stert(e)* sudden jerk, leap, deriv. of the v.]

Aquatic peloton (noun): A group of swimmers who are swimming together and drafting off one another in order to swim more efficiently and faster in the open water. *The team from New York formed a great aquatic peloton at the Open Water Pursuit races.*

Avantouinti (verb): 'Ice-hold swimming' in the Finnish language or swimming in a frozen body of water that requires cutting a hole in the ice, where the water temperature hovers around 0 °C (32 °F). *The Avantouinti Society is a group of swimmers who enjoy swimming in ice holes cut in frozen lakes and ponds.* Synonyms: winter swimming, cold-water swimming, extreme swimming, ice hole swimming, ice swimming.

Avanto swimmer (noun): A person who does ice-hold swimming or avantouinti (Finnish). *The Avanto swimmers cut a hole in the ice and went for a 5-minute dip despite the falling snow language.* Synonyms: winter swimmer, cold-water swimmer, extreme swimmer, ice hole swimmer, ice swimmer.

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

Beach finish (noun): A finish that is on land, requiring the swimmers to exit from the water and run up a beach to a finish line. *The rough water swim has a picturesque beach finish on the sands of Waikiki.* *Synonym: run-out finish.* Antonyms: in-the-water finish and FINA finish.

Beaufort Wind Force Scale (noun): An empirical measure for describing wind velocity based mainly on observed sea conditions. *The referee made reference to the Beaufort Scale when he made the public announcement about the abandonment of the world championship race.* *Synonym: Beaufort Scale.*

Beaufort Number -- Sea Conditions (wave height in meters)

0 - Flat (0 meters)

1 - Ripples without crests (0.1 meters)

2 - Small wavelets. Light breeze. Crests not breaking (0.2 meters)

3 - Large wavelets. Crests begin to break. Scattered whitecaps (0.6 meters)

4 - Small waves. Moderate breeze (1 meter)

5 - Moderate longer waves. Some foam and spray (2 meters)

6 - Large waves with foam crests and some spray. Strong breeze (3 meters)

7 - Sea heaps up and foam begins to streak. Moderate gale (4 meters)

8 - Moderately high waves with breaking crests (5.5 meters)

9 - High waves (6-7 m) with dense foam. Strong gale (7 meters)

10 - Very high waves. Visibility is reduced. Sea surface is white (9 meters)

11 - Exceptionally high waves. Violent storm (11.5 meters)

12 - Huge waves. Air filled with foam and spray. Hurricane (14+ meters)

Beeline (noun): The most direct and straightest route to a specific point during a race, albeit not necessarily always the fastest route due to currents or waves. *The coach directed her swimmer to take a beeline to the next turn buoy.* [Origin: 1820–30, Americanism; BEE + LINE]. *Synonyms: straight course, direct line, shortest route, straight line and Rhumb Line.*

Bilateral breathing (noun): To breathe on both the right and left sides during freestyle swimming. *He was able to check out the landmarks and competition on both sides due to his bilateral breathing.* [Origin: 1765–75; bi- + lateral] + [Origin: 1350–1400; ME brethyng]

Boxed-in (adjective): To get caught between swimmers in the front and back and/or on the left and right sides so as to not be able to swim in the desired direction or at the desired pace, sometimes resulting in additional physical contact. To be closely surrounded by other swimmers and unable to make a move within the pack. *The swimmer was boxed in between three other swimmers after coming out of the turn.* *Synonym: sandwiched and squeezed.*

Box jellyfish (noun): A cube-shaped marine creature that floats with the winds and currents with a nearly transparent, slightly tinted body and long tentacles with stinging cells. *The swimmer swam right into a brood of box jellyfish off of the coast and was stung badly on his arms and face.* *Synonyms: marine stringer, jellyfish, Portuguese Man o War, sea wasp.*

Breakaway (verb): To speed up or increase the pace and/or alter the direction in order to create separation from the rest of the field. *The swimmer made a breakaway on the last loop.* *Synonyms: sprint ahead, swim faster, put on a spurt, pick up the pace, drop the hammer, increase the tempo, drop the field, make a move and breakaway.*

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

Breakers (noun): Waves that crests and break along the shore or shallow shoal that may not be visible. *At the start of the race, the swimmers had to fight through the breakers before they hit the first buoy.*

Brood (noun): A group of jellyfish. The swimmers swam right into a brood of jellyfish off the coast. Synonyms: smack, smuth, smuck, fluther and [improperly] school.

Buoy (noun): A distinctively shaped or marked float, sometimes carrying a signal, signals or logos, anchored to mark a race course, channel, anchorage or swimming hazard. *The swimmers had to go around four buoys in the 10-kilometer course.* [Origin: 1425–75; late ME boye.] Synonym: can, turn buoy.

Call room (noun): A designated indoor or outdoor area or room where the swimmers gather before the race, often to listen to pre-race instructions from race officials or to store their personal gear before the race. *The swimmers were called to the Call Room 30 minutes before the start of the world championships.* Synonym: Ready room.

Can (noun): A distinctively marked colored float in the water, anchored to mark the course for swimmers. *There are four cans throughout the race course that the swimmers must go around to finish.* Synonyms: turns, turn buoys, guide, marker, beacon, signal, buoy.

Carbon-neutral relay (noun): An open water relay that has a net zero carbon footprint. Carbon-neutral relays rely entirely on human power as opposed to motorized escort boats. Examples include open water relays that are escorted by outrigger canoes or kayaks only. *The Clean Half marathon relay has a carbon-neutral relay where the swimmers rotate between swimming and paddling in an outrigger canoe for 15 kilometers.*

Celsius (noun): Also, *Centigrade*. A temperature scale in which 0° represents the ice point and 100° the steam point, often abbreviated to C when written. *FINA does not allow competitions when the water temperature drops below 15°C.* [After Anders Celsius]

Chafing (noun): To irritate or cause irritation due to repeated rubbing of skin against swim suits or other items, including other body parts, due to the swimming stroke, waves, especially around swim suit straps, armpits, shoulders, upper thighs, neck and chin. *The swimmer always used Vaseline to prevent chafing under his arms.* [Origin: 1275–1325; ME chaufen to heat, rub, chafe]

Channel swim (noun): A non-stop solo or relay swim that crosses a natural or man-made body of water, generally understood as an ocean strait, between two land bases or two larger navigable bodies of water, although it can also refer to a traverse between two islands or across a river, slough, archipelago or bay. Generally understood to be a marathon swimming distance (either 10 kilometers or 25 kilometers), but can also be a shorter distance. *The athlete was preparing for her longest channel swim yet by training four days a day.* Synonyms: open water swim, marathon swim and long-distance swim.

Charity swim (noun): An open water swim, relay, stage swim or race with the goal of raising money, media attention and awareness for a cause, individual or non-profit organization, especially among individuals and non-traditional donors.

Chop (noun): Wave action at the surface of the water caused by wind. Small, frequent waves that can be irritating to open water swimmers because they can impede forward movement and can reduce visibility from the surface of the water. *The chop was the reason why he went a bit off-course.* Synonyms: surface chop, small waves, whitecaps and whitewater.

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

Corral (noun): A pen or enclosure for marshaling or directing swimmers onshore at the start and finish of an open water swim or triathlon. *The swimmers were gathering in the corral on the beach just before the start of the race.* [Origin: Spanish, from Vulgar Latin **currale* for vehicles, from Latin *currus* cart, from *currere* to run]

Core body temperature (noun): The operating temperature of a swimmer, specifically in the deep structures of the body such as the liver, in comparison to the temperature of peripheral tissues. This optimum temperature is 36.8°C (98.2°F) through it varies regularly as controlled by one's circadian rhythms. Temperature examination in the rectum is the traditional standard measurement used to estimate core temperature. *The swimmer finished the race, but her core body temperature had dropped significantly and she was experiencing hypothermia.*
Synonyms: core temperature and normal human body temperature.

Corrected course (noun): The most direct course to the next turn buoy, accounting for drift due to actual or anticipated currents, wind and wave action. *The lead pack set off on a corrected course to the next turn buoy.*

Course (noun): A direction or route taken by a swimmer. The path which a race is conducted. The location in which a race is conducted. The swimmers were almost halfway around the race course. *The swimmers studied the race course from the escort boat during the pre-race meeting.* [Origin: 1250–1300; ME *co(u)rs* (n.)]

Criterion race (noun): An open water race where the swimmers exit the water along the race course to run a short distance on shore before diving back into the water to finish. The onshore run, which can occur once or multiple times, can be anywhere along the course which can be a loop course or a point-to-point course. *The criterium race was exciting for the spectators who were able to watch the swimmers run in and out of the water.*

Crossover athlete (noun): An athlete who competes in both pool swimming and **open water swimming** events or an athlete who competes in both **open water swimming** and triathlons or other endurance sports. An athlete who previously competed in pool swimming, triathlons or other endurance sports, but now focuses on **open water swimming** or vice versa. *He was a great cross-over athlete who swam in the 1500-meter freestyle and the 10K event at the Olympics.*

Cross-over move (noun): A move by one swimmer over the ankles, knees, upper legs or lower back of another swimmer during a race in order to change direction or move to the other side of the swimmer in front. The move can be performed by swimming over the opponent in the normal freestyle stroke or by rolling over on one's back and doing a stroke or two of backstroke over the legs of the opponent. However, if the swimmer impedes the forward momentum of another swimmer while making the cross-over move, a yellow card or disqualification may be called by the referee. *The swimmer in back made a quick cross-over move during the race and was able to shift into a better position for the turn.* Synonyms: cross-over stroke.

Cross-over stroke (noun): See cross-over move.

Current (noun): A portion of a large body of water moving in a certain direction. A steady forward movement of water or the flow of a body of water, regardless of cause. The horizontal movement of water in a channel or a bay. *The currents were flowing against the swimmers.*

Cut buoy (noun): In the case of a swimmer who did not properly round a required turn buoy, a violation of the rule that requires the swimmer to return and correctly round the turn mark. *The referee disqualified the swimmer for the cut buoy.*

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

Deck-ups (noun): A pool training methodology whereby the swimmers pull themselves out of the pool after each swim and dive back into the water for the next swim during an interval-training set. The methodology prepares the athletes for the end of an open water race with an onshore finish. *The coach asked the swimmers to do a set of 10 deck-ups where they pulled themselves out of the pool and dove back into the water for 10 fifty-yard sprints on one minute.*

Dark swimmer (noun): An individual who does a dark swim. *When he was training for the English Channel, he joined a few dark swimmers for a night training swim.* Synonym: Night swimmer.

Dark swimming (verb): Swimming at night in natural or man-made bodies of open water. *Because he had never swum at night in the ocean, he was very nervous when he was doing dark swimming.* Synonym: night swimming.

DNF (adjective): Did not finish. A description of a swimmer's result of a race or solo swim with an unspecified reason for not finishing. *The swimmer was a DNF according to the race results.*

DNS (adjective): Did not start. A description of a swimmer's result of a race or solo swim with an unspecified reason for not starting. *The swimmer was a DNS according to the results posted in the newspaper.*

Dock (noun): a fixed pier or floating platform where open water swimmers can either start or finish races or that serve as feeding stations or locations where supporters can cheer. *The lead swimmer came into the dock to receive a feeding from his coach.*

Dolphin (noun): Any of nearly 40 species of small marine toothed whales, living in either salt or fresh water. *The dolphins swam around the pack of swimmers during the race.* Synonym: porpoise. [Middle English *delphyn*, *dolphyn*, from Anglo-French *delphin*, alteration of Old French *dalfin*, from Medieval Latin *dalpinus*, alteration of Latin *delphinus*, from Greek *delphin*-]

Dolphining (noun): To efficiently and quickly start or finish a race in shallow water. At the start of a race where the athletes run into the water, dolphining starts when the athlete is in thigh-deep water where hands are placed above the head and a dive at a shallow angle is performed. If the bottom can be reached, it can be grabbed with the hands as the legs are pulled up under the body to push off the bottom and forward out of the water. It can be repeated until it becomes faster to swim. At the end of a race when the hands can touch bottom, the legs can be placed under the body to push off the bottom and dive forward at a shallow angle. It can be repeated until it becomes faster to run out of the water. *The most experienced swimmers dolphin quickly in and out of the shallow water at the start and finish.*

Double-crossing (noun): A solo or relay swim back and forth across a channel, lake, river or other body of water under the traditional rules of marathon swimming. *The swimmer set the record for a double-crossing in the Catalina Channel.* Synonym: two-way crossing.

DQ (adjective): Disqualified. To be ruled ineligible due to a violation of rules or provisions. *The swimmer was DQ'ed for pulling on the other swimmer's legs during the race.*

Draft (verb): To swim close behind or slightly to the side, usually somewhere between the hips and ankles, of another swimmer (or swimmers) in order to take advantage of their slipstream, especially in a race. *The cagey veteran was drafting behind the young swimmer throughout the race.* [Middle English *draught*, act of drawing

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

or pulling, from Old English.]. Synonyms: hang on, follow, drag and free ride.

Dynamic environment (noun): an open body of water that consists of constantly changing surroundings, elements and conditions where an open water athlete swims. Unlike pool swimming, the open water swimmer must constantly adapt to new situations and overcome possibly unpredictable obstacles and unexpected conditions which is the essence of open water swimming. *The swimmers enjoyed competing in the dynamic environment of the English Channel.*

Ear plugs (noun): A device inserted in the ear canal to protect from the intrusion of water or foreign bodies. Often made of wax or silicon and can help decrease the middle and inner ear exposure to cold and thus lessen the uncomfortable feeling, including vertigo, that comes with exposure to cold water conditions. *The swimmer always uses silicon ear plugs when he does cold water training in the Pacific Ocean.*

Ebb tide (noun): The receding or outgoing (seaward) flow of water when the water level near a shore is lowered. The reverse flow is called the flood tide where there is an inflow of water that results in rising water levels near shore. *The swimmers had a difficult time swimming against the ebb tide.*

Eco-swim (noun): An open water swim, relay, stage swim, race or charity swim that (1) aims to protect, conserve or call attention to the environment or ecology, (2) improve or protect the welfare of marine life or the local or indigenous area, (3) incorporates education of the natural environment or ecology, (4) is conducted in an ecologically-sustainable or environmentally-friendly manner, (5) is held in areas that are under environmental protection or that protect marine life, (6) aims to create or enhance environmental or ecological awareness, (7) raises money or provides direct financial benefits for conservation, marine life or environmental protection, research and/or education, (8) builds awareness or provides education of a local community or culture, (9) lobbies local governments or officials for access to, protection of or a clean-up of a waterway, or (10) minimizes the impact of mankind on the environment. *His swim in the North Pole helped draw attention to climate change.* Synonym: green swim, green swimming.

Escorted Swim (noun): A competitive race, solo swim or relay where each swimmer is required to have a support watercraft that accompanies the swimmer(s) throughout the race. *The coach entered his swimmer in the escorted swim race around Atlantic City.*

Eyes and ears (noun): Offering of navigational advice to swimmers in the water when they cannot see the course or their competition. *The coach on the escort boat served as the eyes and ears of the swimmer when the swells got too large.* [Origin: bef. 900; ME eie, ie, OE ége, var. of éage; c. G Auge; akin to L oculus, Gk ps, Skt akṣi] + [Origin: bef. 900; ME ere, OE éare; c. ON eyra, G Ohr, Goth auso, L auris, Lith ausis, Gk oûs]

Escort (noun): a person or group of persons in a boat, kayak, Jet-Ski or on a paddleboard or surfboard accompanying or leading a swimmer for protection and/or guidance in the open bodies of water. *The escort was leading the swimmers out towards the last turn buoy.* [Origin: 1570–80; < F < It scorta, deriv. of scorgere to conduct < VL *excorrigere] Synonyms: paddler, kayaker, lead boat and escort boat.

Escort (verb): to guide, protect or lead a swimmer in a boat, kayak, Jet-Ski or on a paddleboard while in the open water. *The coach will escort the swimmer on a kayak during the race.* Synonyms: paddle and kayak (for).

Escort boat (noun): A boat or similar watercraft that accompanies or leads a swimmer for protection and/or guidance in the open bodies of water. *The escort boat led the swimmers throughout the 25-kilometer race.*

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

[Origin: 1570–80; **Fahrenheit** (noun): A temperature scale that registers the freezing point of water as 32° and the boiling point as 212° at one atmosphere of pressure, often abbreviated to F when written. *The water temperature was a very comfortable 72°F.* [After Gabriel Daniel Fahrenheit]

Expedition Swimming (verb): Swimming in natural or man-made bodies of open water including oceans, lakes, rivers, bays and reservoirs, together with teammates or swim buddies, usually as part of a guided tour with or without escorts. *The swimmers enjoyed their expedition swim in Baja California where they saw many dolphins.* Synonyms: wild swimming, open water swimming, free swimming, swimtrekking.

Feeding (noun or verb): Eating or drinking during a race, relay or solo swim. *The swimmers stopped momentarily for a feeding.* [Origin: bef. 900; ME *feding*, OE *féding*]. Synonyms: drink, gel pack and some food.

Feeding pole (noun): see *Feeding stick*.

Feeding pontoon (noun): A boat or other temporary or fixed floating structure used by coaches to provide fuel (i.e., food) or hydration (i.e., drink) to swimmers in a race. *The coaches were standing on the pontoon waiting for the swimmers to come in for a feeding.*

Feeding station (noun): A boat or other temporary or fixed floating structure, such as a dock or pier, used by coaches to provide fuel (i.e., food) or hydration (i.e., drink) to swimmers in a race. *The coaches were standing on the feeding station waiting for the swimmers to come in.* Synonyms: feeding pontoon and feeding platform.

Feeding stick (noun): A long slender mechanical implement with a cup or bottle holder at the end in which coaches can hand fuel (e.g., gel packs, food, chocolate) or hydration (e.g., water, Gatorade, tea) to their swimmers during a race or solo swim. The implement is generally hand-made, but some recent models can extend up to four meters in length. *The coach stood at the feeding pontoon with her feeding stick in order to hand the water bottle to her swimmer.* [Origin: bef. 1000; ME *stikke*, OE *sticca*; akin to OHG *stehho*, ON *stik stick*]. Synonyms: pole and rod.

FINA (acronym for Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur) (noun): the international governing body of swimming, water polo, diving, synchronized swimming and open water swimming, recognized by the International Olympic Committee for administering international aquatic competitions. It was founded in 1908 and is headquartered in Lausanne, Switzerland. *FINA administers two different global open water swimming circuits in addition to the biennial World Swimming Championships held every odd year.*

FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup (noun): A year-round global series of professional marathon swims organized by FINA, 10 kilometers in distance, held in countries such as Brazil, United Arab Emirates, Portugal, Canada, Hong Kong, Singapore, China and Mexico. Many of the races are in loop courses that allow for spectators to see the athletes battling with each other throughout the race. *The top pro swimmers travel the world to participate in the FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup.*

FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix (noun): A year-round global series of professional marathon swims organized by FINA, ranging from 15 to 88 kilometers in length, held in countries such as Argentina, Italy, Serbia, Macedonia, Canada and Mexico. *One of the toughest endurance circuits in the world has to be the FINA Open Water Grand Prix.*

FINA Technical Open Water Swimming Committee (noun): A FINA committee (acronym: **TOWSC**) that

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

sets and implements the rules and policies of open water swimming and organizes the FINA 10K Marathon Swimming World Cup and the FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix; have supported the International Olympic Committee to add marathon swimming to the Olympic schedule. Current members include Chairman Ronnie Wong of Hong Kong, Vice Chairman Jorge Delgado Panchana of Ecuador, Honorary Secretary Flavio Bomio of Switzerland, FINA Bureau Liaison Dennis Miller of Fiji, Zouhier El Moufti of Morocco, Tomas Haces German of Cuba, Steven Munatones of the USA, Khwaja Aziz of Bangladesh, Valerijus Belovas of Lithuania, Samuel Greetham of Great Britain, Andrea Prayer of Italy, Noam Zvi of Israel, John West of New Zealand, Hatem Seifallah Ibrahim of Egypt, Beltran Washington of Uruguay and Shelley Taylor-Smith of Australia. *The FINA Technical Open Water Swimming Committee sets the rules of the open water swimming competition at the Olympics and World Swimming Championships.*

Finish cameras (noun): Video cameras set up in fixed locations onshore and/or on docks, piers or other locations to record the finishes for official review after a race. *Because many world-class races are so close, officials use finish cameras to determine the race results.*

Finish chute (noun): A series of lane lines, buoys or other such markings that indicate the finish area and help direct the swimmers to the final finish line or touch pads. *The lead group of swimmers all entered the finish chute together, each sprinting to the touch pads.*

First infringement (noun): When a swimmer commits his or her first infraction of the rules. In championship races, a yellow flag and a card bearing the swimmer's number is raised by the referee to indicate and to inform the swimmer that he or she is in violation of the rules. *Whistles may also be used by the referee to get the swimmer's attention on the first infringement.*

Fish (noun): The colloquial term occasionally used on a channel crossing or a marathon swim by an experienced support crew for the type of fish with a cartilaginous skeleton and a highly streamlined body with a tough usually dull gray skin, commonly known as a shark. Sharks are typically active predators that fascinating and frightening, found in all seas, ranging in size from 17 cm to 12 meters, with a few species sometimes dangerous to humans. *The support crew saw the fish near the swimmer, but did not point to it in order to avoid scaring the swimmer.* Synonyms: Shark, The Man in the Gray Suit, Mack, Old Toothy, Garbage Can of the Sea, The Landlord. [Some scholars believe shark is derived from the German word *schurke*, meaning villain.]

Five Oceans (noun): Completion of a long-distance swim in all five oceans of the world: the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Southern (also known as the Antarctic) and Arctic Oceans. *Lewis Gordon Pugh completed the **Five Oceans** when he swam in the Atlantic Ocean (1992 English Channel, 1992), the Arctic Ocean (2003 North Cape in Norway), the Southern Ocean (2005 Deception Island in sub-Antarctica, 2005), the Indian Ocean (2006 Nelson Mandela Bay in South Africa) and Pacific Ocean (2006 15K Manly Beach to the Sydney Opera House in Australia).* Synonyms: Ocean's Seven, Triple Crown.

Flood tide (noun): The inflow of water (from the sea) that results in rising water levels near shore. The reverse flow is called the ebb tide where there is a receding or outgoing (seaward) flow of water that results in the water level near a shore being lowered. *The swimmers had a difficult time swimming against the flood tide towards the end of the race.*

Fluid (noun): Liquid nourishment that provides hydration during an open water race. Popular examples are Gatorade and water. *The coach prepared the swimmer's fluid at the feeding station.* [Origin: 1300–50; ME fuel(le), feuel]

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

Four-wide (noun): Four swimmers swimming side-by-side during a race. *There is a four-wide sprinting around the buoy towards the finish.* [Origin: modern-day NASCAR term].

Free swimmer (noun): An individual who does free swimming. *He never enters open water races, but he is an avid free swimmer who always goes for a free swim in the ocean.*

Free swimming (verb): Swimming in natural or man-made bodies of open water including oceans, lakes, rivers, bays and reservoirs, performed solely for the pleasure of doing the swim. Open water races are not considered a free swim which is generally at least one kilometer in distance. *He swam in the IK pier-to-pier race and then did a free swim back to the start.* Synonym: wild swimming, open water swimming, expedition swimming.

Freestyle relay (noun): An open water swimming relay where each swimmer can swim any distance or for any amount of time that they wish. Unlike the traditional English Channel relays where each swimmer swims for one or two hours, staying in the same rotation, swimmers have much more freedom in deciding their own distance and time in freestyle relays. *The swimmers started their freestyle relay in legs of approximately 10 minutes each, then gradually reduced their time as the relay progressed across the channel.*

Fuel (noun): Solid food or nourishment that provides energy source during an open water race. Examples are bananas and chocolate and gel packs like CarbBoom, Clif Shot, GU and PowerGel. *The coach put a bit of fuel in his water bottle at the feeding station.* [Origin: 1300–50; ME fuel(le), feuel]

Gel pack (noun): Small, easy-to-use, individual squeeze packages that contain simple and complex carbohydrates, antioxidants and amino acids in order to provide an energy boost during a race. Single-serving pouches are sold in a variety of sizes, shapes and flavors, and can be easily digested while swimming. *The swimmer stuck two gel packs in her swim suit before the start of the race.* Synonyms: sports gel and pouch.

Gamma globulin injections (noun): Injections that are usually given in an attempt to temporarily boost an individual's immunity against disease. Before starting the marathon swim in the river, he took several vaccines including a gamma globulin injection as a precaution.

GPS (noun): Acronym for Global Positioning System; a global system of U.S. navigational satellites developed to provide precise positional and velocity data and global time synchronization for air, sea, and land travel. *The race director calculated the location of the turn buoys on the course by using GPS.*

GPS move (noun): A veering off-course by one swimmer of another swimmer. Towards the finish of a race or into a turn buoy, when two swimmers are swimming shoulder-to-shoulder, one swimmer swims slightly off-course in a controlled intention manner. By slightly and steadily moving the opponent slightly off-course, the swimmer can then quickly move back on course to create a small and effective gap to gain either a navigational or positional advantage. *The swimmer did a beautiful GPS move when he veered the other swimmer slightly off-course and then cut in towards the finish.*

Grease up (verb): To apply a lubricant, ointment, spray or petroleum-based jelly at the friction points on one's body to prevent chafing and irritation (e.g., arms, chin, neck, inner thighs, under swimsuit straps). *The swimmer put lanolin on his torso, but he put Vaseline around his neck and arms.*

Guide buoy (noun): A distinctively marked or colored float in the water along the race course, anchored to provide navigational guidance for swimmers. Guide buoys may be passed on either side of the body. *The*

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

swimmers were helped by having the guide buoys along the course.

Gulp and Go (noun): The third rule of feeding when an open water swimmer quickly consumes fuel (e.g., gel pack) or hydration (e.g., water) received from his/her coach on the feeding pontoon, then immediately begin to swim again after the momentary feeding stop. *The swimmer came in and did a great 'Gulp and Go' despite being crowded at the feeding station.*

High tide (noun): 1. The time at which the tide is highest. 2. The highest level of the water at a particular time and place. *The swimmer cleared the coral reef by a few meters by swimming during high tide.* Synonym: high water.

Hook (verb): To swim to the left in the open water. *The swimmer hooked to the left between the second and third turn buoys.*

Hot spot (noun): any point somewhere along a race course where an award is given for the first swimmer to reach as a means to motivate the field to swim fast throughout the course. *The swimmers raced to each of the three hot spots along the course.*

Hydration (noun): Water, Gatorade, flat Coca-Cola or Mountain Dew, fortified water drinks, tea and other liquids to restore or maintain fluid balance during an open water race. *The importance of hydration to prevent dehydration during the race cannot be overemphasized.* [Origin: 1795–1805; HYDR + -ATE]. Synonyms: liquid and drinks. Note: some nutritionists argue that caffeine does not hydrate because it is also a diuretic.

Hyperthermia (noun): An abnormally high body temperature, usually resulting from warm water, warm temperatures, bright skies and/or humidity, during open water races, especially common during intense competitions or complicated due to dehydration. Several degrees of severity exist, starting with Heat Edema with the swelling of hands and feet. Heat Stroke is a medical emergency with potential for profound confusion, loss of coordination, hallucinations and coma, typically with a core body temperature of greater than 104°F. Between these two extremes there are intermediate degrees of severity, including (in order) Heat Syncope, Heat Cramps and Heat Exhaustion. *The doctors were ready to deal with cases of hyperthermia due to the hot water conditions under sunny skies.*

Hypothermia (noun): An abnormally low body temperature, often caused by prolonged exposure to cold water during open water races, especially when combined with chilly winds, pronounced fatigue for swimmers with a low body fat percentage. Hypothermia is medically defined when the core body temperature drops below 35°C (95°F). Mild hypothermia may be identified by increased shivering or vasoconstriction. Severe hypothermia includes altered cognition, unusual behavior, weakness, apathy, reduced cardiac output, and even coma. *The swimmer was pulled from the water when it became obvious that she was suffering from hypothermia.* [Origin: 1885–90; HYPO- + THERM- + -IA where hypo- + Greek thermē, heat; see gwher- in Indo-European roots + -ia]

Ice swimming (verb): Swimming in a frozen body of water, which requires cutting a hole in the ice, where the water temperature hovers around 0 °C (32 °F). *Ice swimmers generally do not put their heads below the surface of the water because moving under the edge of the ice is enormously dangerous.* Synonyms: winter swimming, cold-water swimming, extreme swimming, ice hole swimming, avantouinti (Finnish).

Impede (verb): To obstruct, interfere or retard in movement or progress by means of cutting off, swimming into, blocking or pulling on legs, ankles, arms or shoulders of other swimmers during a race. *The swimmer was*

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

impeded by his competitor when he was cut off towards the end of the race.

Intermediate buoys (noun): Buoys placed between required turn buoys or markers that may be passed on either side without penalty. *The swimmer went to the left side of the intermediate buoys because he thought this would give him an advantage.*

International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame (noun): an affiliate organization to the International Swimming Hall of Fame that was established in 1961 to recognize the marathon swimmers throughout the world and governed by an international selection committee of marathon swimming experts. It recognizes not only the world's most successful swimmers in competitive races, but also individuals for their solo swim exploits around the world. *Due to her exploits as a professional marathon swimmer and her unprecedented solo swims, she was inducted in the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame.*

In-water start (noun): A start that begins in the water and does not require swimmers to dive in from a starting pontoon or run in the water from a beach, pier or shoreline to start. Swimmers stand or tread water in a depth sufficient for them to commence swimming on the start signal. *The bay swim used an in-water start where the swimmers lined up behind the rope.* Synonym: in-the-water start. Antonyms: beach start, dive start and run-in start.

In-water finish (noun): A finish that is in the water and do not require the swimmers to exit from the body of water where the race is held. *The bay swim used a rope across two buoys as the in-water finish.* Synonym: in-the-water finish. Antonyms: beach finish and run-out finish.

Jellyfish (noun): A free-swimming marine creature that floats with the winds and currents with a nearly transparent body and long tentacles with stinging cells. *The swimmer swam right into a brood of jellyfish off of the coast and was stung on his arms and face.* Synonyms: marine stringer, box jellyfish, Portuguese Man o War and sea wasp. Agua mala [Spanish].

Katabatic wind (noun): A downslope wind that carries high density air from a higher elevation down a slope under the force of gravity that can rush down elevated slopes at hurricane speeds, but most are not that intense and many are on the order of 10 knots or less (e.g., Mistral in the Mediterranean, Bora (or Bura) in the Adriatic, Santa Ana Winds in southern California, Oroshi in Japan and The Barber in New Zealand). [Origin: from Greek *katabatikos* meaning going downhill]. Synonym: drainage wind, fall winds, williwaw.

Kelp (noun): Any large brown seaweed that can grow very long and form kelp forests in the shallow oceans below about 20°C (68°F). *The swimmers swam right into the kelp forest as they were swimming along the coast.* Synonym: seaweed.

Kona winds (noun): A wind from the south or southwest that generally leads to glassy ocean conditions around the islands of Hawaii. *The channel swimmers were fortunate to hit a day with Kona winds.*

Knot (noun): A unit of speed equal to one nautical mile or about 1.15 statute miles per hour. *The race was conducted under wavy conditions and 10-knot winds.*

Landmark (noun): Large, visible or stationary objects that are easy to see with a quick sighting from the perspective of the swimmer in an open water race; includes buildings, light poles on piers or anchored boats visible from the distance. *The swimmer looked for various landmarks as she was swimming into to shore at the*

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

end of the race. [Origin: bef. 1000; ME; OE landmearc]. Synonyms: guide, point and mark.

Lanolin (noun): A greasy, fatty substance, insoluble in water, that is extracted from wool-bearing animals used to coat the skin of swimmers, especially to friction points (e.g., underarms, inside thighs, chin and neck) in order to prevent chafing or help reduce the impact of cold water. *The coach spread a thin layer of lanolin under the swimmer's shoulders.*

Lap (noun): One complete round, length or circuit around a race course. *The swimmers have two more laps around the course.* [Middle English lappen, from lappe, lap, lappet]. Synonym: loop, round and circuit.

Lateral laze (noun): A tactical break-away move in open water races where a competitor moves laterally or apparently swims crookedly away from a pack before breaking hard and increasing pace in order to create separation from the pack. *The winner pulled a lateral laze during the third loop which opened up a gap between her and the other swimmers in the lead pack.*

Lead boat (noun): A boat or similar watercraft that leads a swimmer or the lead pack of swimmers on a race course. *The lead boat led the swimmers throughout the 25-kilometer race.* Synonym: escort boat.

Lead pack (noun): The fastest or first group of swimmers in a race, all closely swimming together. *The lead pack sprinted towards the finish ahead of the other competitors.* [Origin: 1175–1225; (n.) ME pak, packe]

Leading the pack (verb): To swim ahead of a group of swimmers in an open water race. *The favorite was leading the pack during the first half of the race.*

Left- (or right-) shoulder turn (noun): The required turn direction when swimming around a turn buoy. In a left-shoulder turn, the turn buoys must be kept on the left side of the swimmer as the swimmer swims counter-clockwise around the turn buoys. In a right-shoulder turn, the turn buoys must be kept on the right side of the swimmer as the swimmer swims clockwise around the turn buoys. *All orange buoys must be passed using a right shoulder turn in the clockwise direction.*

Line of sight (noun): An unobstructed path from the swimmer's eye to a distant point such as the turn buoys or finish line. *The swimmer had a great line of sight from the turn buoy to the finish area.*

Long-distance swimming (noun): Swimming in natural or man-made bodies of water such as oceans, bays, lakes, reservoirs, rowing basins and rivers; generally understood to be at least 3 kilometers in distance. *The masters swimmers decided to try long-distance swimming when they visited Hawaii.* Synonyms: open water swimming, rough water swimming and marathon swimming.

Loop (noun): One complete round, length or circuit around a race course, especially one that is circular in shape. *The swimmers have to swim four loops around the Olympic 10K course in the rowing basin.* [Alteration (influenced by Italian lega) of Middle English liege, from Old French ligue, from Medieval Latin liga and from Old Italian lega, liga (from legare, to bind), both from Latin ligāre, to bind; see leig- in Indo-European roots]. Synonyms: lap, round and circuit.

Low tide (noun): 1. The time at which the tide is lowest. 2. The lowest level of the water at a particular time and place. The lowest tides (called the spring tides) occur when the sun and moon are directly aligned with respect to Earth. Low tides are less extreme when the sun and moon are at right angles (called the neap tides).

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

The swimmers were not able to swim over the coral reef at low tide. Synonym: low water.

Make a break (verb): To speed up or increase the pace in order to create separation from the competition. *The swimmer plans to make a break just after the last turn.* Synonyms: sprint ahead, swim faster, put on a spurt, pick up the pace, drop the hammer, increase the tempo, drop the field, make a move and breakaway.

Make a move (verb): To catch up to or swim into position ahead of one's competitors. *The swimmer will make his move in the second half of the race.* Synonyms: sprint ahead, swim faster, put on a spurt, pick up the pace, drop the hammer, increase the tempo, drop the field, make a break and breakaway.

Marathon swim (noun): A non-stop solo or relay swim that covers a minimum of 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) in the large outdoor bodies of water such as oceans, bays, lakes, reservoirs, rowing basins, dams, lidos, canals and rivers, as defined by FINA (Fédération Internationale de Natation Amateur). Alternatively, or a minimum of 25 kilometers (15.5 miles), as defined by the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame. *The athletes were preparing for a 25-kilometer pro marathon swimming race.* [Origin: 1895–1900; allusion to Pheidippides' 26-mi. (42-km) run from MARATHON to Athens to carry news of the Greek victory over the Persians in 490 b.c.] + [Origin: bef. 1000; ME; OE *swimmende* (adj.)] Synonyms: open water swimming, rough water swimming, channel swimming and long distance swimming.

Marking (noun): Numbers that are written in black on the shoulders, upper arms, shoulder blades, thighs, calves, wrists and/or swim caps of the swimmers for identification purposes prior to the start of the race. These numbers are used to monitor the swimmer's progress, announce the swimmer's position to the crowd and media, and to inform swimmers who commit rule infractions during the race. Paddlers, kayakers and escort boats for individual swimmers can also be marked on both sides with the swimmer's race number so it is easily seen from both sides. *The race officials write markings on the swimmer's shoulders 30 minutes before the start of the race.* Synonyms: race numbers and competitor's numbers.

Mass participation swim (noun): A non-timed, non-competitive swimming event where communal enjoyment, open water training and post-event entertainment and fraternization with like-minded athletes are the primary goals. *The mass participation swim in Taiwan attracted over 25,000 swimmers in a relaxed, entertaining atmosphere.*

Mass start (noun): When a large number of swimmers all start together at the same time (as opposed to seeded starts or age-group starts). *450 swimmers gathered for a mass start near the pier.* [Origin: bef. 1150; (v.) ME *sterten* to rush out, leap (c. MHG *sterzen*); r. OE *styrtan* (attested once), c. G *stürzen*; (n.) ME *stert(e)* sudden jerk, leap, deriv. of the v.]

Miss a feeding (verb): to drop a cup or bottle with hydration due to jostling in a crowd around the feeding station or to not get close enough to the feeding station to receive fuel (e.g. gel pack) or hydration (e.g., Gatorade). *The swimmer missed a feeding for the second time at the feeding station.*

Mixed zone (noun): An area near the finish line where media representatives, photographers and team officials can interview and photograph swimmers after the race. *The swimmer smiled widely and waved to her coach from the Mixed Zone where she was being interviewed by the press.*

Navigation (noun): The art or science of plotting, ascertaining or directing the course of a swimmer in an open water race. *The coaches and swimmers discussed the navigation options for the swim around the island.*

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

Navigational IQ (noun): The ability for a swimmer to swim the straightest and fastest path in the open water, especially in a race. *She has the highest navigational IQ among all the competitors.*

Neap tide (noun): A tide that occurs twice a month, in the first and third quarters of the moon, when the difference between high and low tide is least. *The channel swimmer decided to go on a neap tide due to the availability of the escort boat.* [Middle English neep, from Old English *neap* (flood), *neap* (tide).] Antonym: spring tide.

Neoprene cap (noun): A swim cap made of neoprene that usually covers the ears and hooks under the chin and is designed for maximum warmth and protection during cold open water swims. *The swimmers put on their neoprene caps in order to avoid the ice cream headaches.*

Nipper (noun): Young Australian lifesavers aged between 7 and 13 years old, many of whom do open water swims and surf carnivals. A young open water swimmer. *The nipper won the 1-mile swim after catching a great wave at the end of the race.* Synonyms: grommet, OceanKid, sharkbait.

Ocean's Seven (noun): Open water swimming's equivalent of mountaineering's Seven Summits which are the highest mountains in each of the seven continents. It includes the (1) Irish Channel between Ireland and Scotland, (2) Cook Strait between the North and South Islands of New Zealand, (3) Molokai Channel between Oahu and Molokai Islands in Hawaii, U.S.A., (4) English Channel between England and France, (5) Catalina Channel in Southern California, U.S.A., (6) Tsugaru Channel between the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido in Japan, and (7) Strait of Gibraltar between Europe and Africa. *Achieving the Ocean's Seven requires an ability to swim in both very cold and very warm seas and a tremendous amount of planning, time, financial resources and multi-national support teams of knowledgeable local experts.*

Off course (adjective): Not swimming in the right (or fastest or straightest) direction in an open water race. *The swimmers started to veer off course to the left.* [Origin: orig. stressed var. of OF] + [Origin: 1250–1300; ME *co(u)rs* (n.)

On course (adjective): Swimming in the right (or fastest or straightest) direction in an open water race. *The swimmers were right on course throughout the race.* [Origin: bef. 900; ME *on*, *an*, OE: *on*, *in*, *to*; c. D *aan*, G *an*, ON *ā*, Goth *ana*; akin to Gk *aná up*] + [Origin: 1250–1300; ME *co(u)rs* (n.)

One-way (noun): A solo or relay swim in one direction across a channel, lake, river or other body of water under the traditional rules of marathon swimming. *The swimmer set a one-way crossing in Lac St-Jean.* Synonym: one-way crossing.

Open Water Pursuit (noun): A race of a fixed distance where teams of swimmers are set off in staggered starts. The finish time is the time the third or last swimmer crosses the finish. *The swimmers were the fourth team to be set off in the 2K Open Water Pursuit.* Synonym: Team time trial relay.

Open water swimming (noun): Swimming in natural or man-made bodies of water such as oceans, bays, lakes, reservoirs, rowing basins, lidos, canals, dams and rivers; generally understood to be longer than 1 kilometer in distance, but can include swims of shorter distance. *The triathletes practice open water swimming in the lake every Saturday.* Synonyms: marathon swimming, rough water swimming, channel swimming, wild swimming and long distance swimming.

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

OTL or Over Time Limit (noun): The official designation when an athlete does not finish the race within the specified time given by the race organizer. The specified time could be a certain number of hours or minutes or the maximum amount of time that is allowed for swimmers to remain in the water after the first swimmer finishes the race. Time limits can start from the finish time of the first swimmer or are pre-determined time periods after the start. *The race results showed OTL after his name.*

Paceline swimming (noun): When swimmers follow immediately one after another in the pool or open water and the first swimmer leads for a certain time or distance, then falls back to the rear when the second swimmer then takes the lead and pulls the group. The group rotates so each swimmer has the opportunity to lead the group for a certain time or distance. *The coach asked the swimmers to do paceline swimming for 1000 meters with each swimmer rotating into the lead every 100 meters.*

Pack (noun): A group of swimmers swimming together in a race or during training. *The swimmers were in a large pack during the start of the race.* [Origin: 1175–1225; (n.) ME pak, packe, Middle English pak, possibly of Low German origin]

Polar Bear Swim (noun): A swimming event of any distance held during the winter where participants enter an open body of water despite low water and air temperatures. Often held to raise money for a charity or an environmental cause. *The swimmers gathered at the lake where temperatures plunged near freezing for the annual Polar Bear Swim.*

Pontoon (noun): Air-filled floating objects in or along an open water course that can support the weight of several humans. pontoons are often set against land, fixed objects or a pier for stability, but can also be independently anchored along the race course in order to provide a stationary platform to allow (a) swimmers to start and finish an open water race, (b) coaches and trainers to provide hydration and fuel to athletes during an open water race, or (c) officials to stand and judge a race or a specific area in a race such as a turn buoy or feeding station. The pontoon may be constructed from a variety of materials. *The coaches positioned themselves along the pontoon that was floating five meters from the race course.* Synonyms: Feeding station, start station, float, dock, float, raft, platform.

Porpoise (noun): Any of various small gregarious toothed whales with a blunt snout. The porpoise was jumping, vocalizing and swimming around the pack of swimmers during the race. Porpoise have shorter beaks and flattened teeth distinct from the conical teeth of dolphins and all six species live in the ocean, mostly near shore. Synonym: dolphin. [Middle English *propoys*, from Anglo-French *porpeis*, alteration of Medieval Latin *porcopiciscis*, from Latin *porcus* pig + *piscis* fish]

Positioning (noun): A place or location, often strategic and intentional, but occasionally unintentional or accidental, where swimmers finds themselves during an open water race. *The coach stressed to the swimmer the need to hold her positioning around the turn buoys on the last loop.* [Middle English *posicioun*, from Old French *posicion*, from Latin *positiō*, *positiōn-*, from *positus*, past participle of *pōnere*, to place; see *apo-* in Indo-European roots]. Synonyms: place and location.

Rabbit (noun): A swimmer whose goal is chiefly to set a fast pace, either to set a record or to exhaust a specific competitor so that a teammate can win. *The teammate served as a rabbit by going out fast on the first two loops.* [Origin: 1375–1425; late ME *rabet(te)* young rabbit, bunny, prob.

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

Race numbers (noun): Numbers that are prominently written in semi-permanent black ink or with temporary tattoos on the upper arms, shoulder blades and wrists of the swimmer for identification purposes. These numbers are used to monitor the swimmer's progress, announce the swimmer's position to the crowd and media and inform swimmers who are committing rule infractions during the race. *The race officials write the race numbers on the swimmer's shoulders 30 minutes before the start of the race.* Synonyms: marking, markings and competitor numbers.

Reach and Roll (noun): The second rule of feeding when the swimmer extends his/her hand to grab fuel (e.g., gel pack) or hydration (e.g., water) from his/her coach on the feeding pontoon, then turns over on his/her back to consumer the fuel or hydration. *The swimmer was ready to reach and roll once he grabbed the water bottle from his coach.*

Ready room (noun): A designated indoor or outdoor area or room where the swimmers gather before the race, often to listen to pre-race instructions from race officials or to store their personal gear before the race. *The swimmers were called to the Ready Room 30 minutes before the start of the world championships.* Synonym: Call room.

Red card (noun): A red-colored penalty card that indicates the immediate disqualification of a swimmer due to unsportsmanlike conduct or a serious infraction of the rules during an open water race. *The head referee gave a red card to the swimmer who pulled back his competitor around the turn buoy.* Synonyms: disqualification, DQ.

Red-carded (verb): To be disqualified by a referee during an open water race. *The swimmer was red-carded by the referee after his unsportsmanlike conduct.* Synonym: disqualified, DQ'ed.

Referee (noun): The designated individuals who judge open water races based on the established rules set by FINA or the race director. Referees can be located at the start, turns, finishes and/or on escort boats along the course. *The referee gave a yellow card to the swimmer after observing the second rule infraction.* [Origin: 1605–15; REFER + -EE]. Synonyms: judge, ref.

Riptide (noun): a strong flow of water flowing away from a shoreline, typically near a pier, jetty or through the surf. *The swimmers swam near the pier on their way out of the ocean race in order to gain an advantage from the riptide.* Synonym: rip current.

Rogue waves (noun): Relatively large and spontaneous ocean surface waves that are a threat even to large ships and ocean liners. Waves whose height is more than twice the significant wave height, which is the mean of the largest third of waves in a wave record. Therefore rogue waves are not necessarily the biggest waves found at sea; they are surprisingly large waves that occur in deep water or where a number of physical factors such as strong winds and fast currents converge. *The swimmer dreamed of a channel swim where he was swallowed up by a rogue wave.* Synonyms: freak waves, monster waves, killer waves, and extreme waves.

Rough water swimming or roughwater swimming (noun): Swimming in outdoor bodies of water such as oceans, bays, lakes, reservoirs, rowing basins and rivers. *The athletes were for some rough water swimming at the beach.* Synonyms: open water swimming, marathon swimming and long distance swimming.

Sandbar (noun): A long mass or low ridge of submerged or partially exposed sand built up in the water along a shore, river, beach or between or near islands that is caused the action of waves, tides or currents. *The swimmers*

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

swam to the sandbar during their weekend training swims.

Sandbar swim (noun): An open water swim that starts, finishes or passes by a sandbar. *Fiji is famous for its sandbar swims that start on a sandbar and finish on various tropical islands.*

Sea life (noun): Living organisms found in the ocean and other bodies of water that open water swimmers may encounter during training sessions or races. These include fish, jellyfish, sea nettles, sea lice, turtles, porpoise, dolphins, sea lions, sharks, coral, seaweed, kelp, sea snakes. *The beginner dreaded sea life during his first open water race in the Caribbean, but the experienced swimmers were looking forward to seeing all kinds of sea life.* [Origin: bef. 900; ME see, D zee, G See, ON sær sea, Goth saiws marsh] + [Origin: bef. 900; ME lif(e); OE lif; c. D lijf, G Leib body, ON lif life, body]. Synonym: sea creatures.

Sea wasp (noun): A cube-shaped marine creature that floats with the winds and currents with a nearly transparent, slightly tinted body and long tentacles with stinging cells. A type of cubozoan that is formally categorized separately from other types of jellyfish. *The swimmer swam right into a sea wasp off of the coast and was stung badly on his arms and face.* Synonyms: marine stringer, box jellyfish, jellyfish, Portuguese Man o War and sea wasp.

Seaweed (noun): A mass or growth of red, brown or green marine plants that grow in the sea. *The swimmer was surprised when he swam right into the seaweed.* Synonym: kelp, marine algae.

Seek and Spot (noun): the first rule of feeding when the swimmer heads toward the feeding pontoon and identifies his/her coach standing on the pontoon. *The swimmer wanted to seek and spot his coach on the feeding pontoon before he cut in to feed.*

Second Infringement (noun): When a swimmer commits his or her second infraction of the rules. In championship races, a red card or flag and a card bearing the swimmer's number is raised by the referee to indicate and to inform the swimmer that he or she is in violation of the rules for the second time. *The swimmer impeded his competitors near the finish and received his second infringement.*

Seeded start (noun): When the swimmers are divided by specific abilities or times at the start (as opposed to age- or gender-based starts or mass starts). *Swimmers faster than 20 minutes in the 1500 meters gathered for a start near the pier.* [Origin: bef. 1150; (v.) ME sterten to rush out, leap (c. MHG sterzen); r. OE styrtan (attested once), c. G stürzen; (n.) ME stert(e) sudden jerk, leap, deriv. of the v.]

Shark cage (noun): A strongly built rectangular deterrent, supported by pontoons that is towed by an escort boat to serve as a swimmer's protection against sharks and other predators in the ocean during a marathon swim. The cage can have mesh around it in order to protect from jellyfish. *The swimmer was tossed about in the ocean by the turbulence caused by the shark cage.*

Shark net (noun): A large submerged mesh net placed around beaches to reduce shark attacks on swimmers. *The shark was swimming near the shore, but was caught in the shark net and eventually drowned.*

Sheltered-sided breathing (noun): To breathe away from the waves or elements in open water swimming. *When the surface chop began due to the strong wind, he started sheltered-side breathing to his left side.*

Shoot the gap (verb): To swim between a narrow gap between two competitors, especially in a pack during a

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

race. *The swimmer shot the gap between his competitors just before the final turn buoy.*

Sighting (noun): The act of seeing or navigating in the open water, generally towards landmarks, turn buoys, escort boats or the finish. Lifting the head to look ahead to the side or behind in order to decide the optimal direction to swim in an open water race or swim. *The swimmer took frequent sightings as she raised her head every 25 strokes.* [Middle English, from Old English *sihth*, *gesiht*, something seen; see *sek* in Indo-European roots]. Synonyms: view and look.

Single-crossing (noun): A solo or relay swim in one direction across a channel, lake, river or other body of water under the traditional rules of marathon swimming. *The swimmer set the single-crossing record for the Molokai Channel.* Synonym: one-way crossing.

Sister swims (noun): A mutually beneficial relationship between two independently organized open water swimming events whereby each swim promotes the other and there is a cross-sharing of information and, occasionally, swimmers, either randomly-drawn individuals or the overall winners. *The partnership between the sister swims in England and Fiji was promoted on the websites and brochures.*

Slice (verb): To swim to the right in the open water. *The swimmer sliced to the right between the second and third turn buoys.*

Slip streaming or drafting vessels (verb): Intentionally taking advantage of the wake of escort boats or officiating watercraft on the course; rules prohibit this action by swimmers. *The referee gave a yellow flag to the swimmer who was slip streaming behind the escort boat.*

Solo swim (noun): An individual swim that is not part of an official race. *More people have successfully climbed Mount Everest than have completed a solo swim of the English Channel.* [Origin: 1685-95; Ital. *L sölus* alone]. Synonym: single swim.

Split time (noun): A time for a set distance within a race. *His split time for the first loop was 29 minutes.* Synonyms: interim time and split.

Spring tide (noun): 1. The exceptionally high and low tides that occur at the time of the new moon or the full moon when the sun, moon, and earth are approximately aligned and the difference between high and low tide is the greatest. *When the sun, moon and earth are aligned, their collective gravitational pull on the Earth's water is strengthened, causing spring tides.*

Staged race (noun): A type of timed competition conducted over the course of two or more consecutive days where the distance of the individual stages can vary on each day and the starting point of the subsequent stages begins at or near the same point as the finish of the previous day's swim. The overall final time of the each competitor is the culmination of the swimming times of the individual stages. The overall final distance is the distance measured from the starting point to the finish point in miles, nautical miles or kilometers. The finish on the final day can be at the same location or at a different location than the start on the first day. *The 3-day staged race began at the foot of the river and ended at the bay.* Synonyms: stage swim, staged swim, stage race and staged relay.

Staged relay (noun): A type of timed relay competition conducted over the course of two or more consecutive days where the distance of the individual stages can vary on each day and the starting point of the subsequent

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

stages begins at or near the same point as the finish of the previous day's swim. The overall final time of each relay is the culmination of the swimming times of the individual stages. The overall final distance is the distance measured from the starting point to the finish point in miles, nautical miles or kilometers. The finish on the final day can be at the same location or at a different location than the start on the first day. *The staged relay from San Francisco passed by the Golden Gate Bridge on its eighth day.* Synonyms: stage race, staged race, stage swim and staged swim.

Staged swim (noun): A type of solo swim, relay or race conducted over two or more consecutive days where the distance of the individual stages can vary on each day and the starting point of the subsequent stages begins at or near the same point as the finish of the previous day's swim. The overall final time is the culmination of the swimming times of the individual stages. The overall final distance is the distance measured from the starting point to the finish point in miles, nautical miles or kilometers. The finish on the final day can be at the same location or at a different location than the start on the first day. *The staged swim from Los Angeles to San Diego was conducted over ten days.* Synonyms: stage swim, staged race and staged relay.

Starting platform (noun): A dock, pier, pontoon or other floating structure where the swimmers stand to start an open water race. *The 30 swimmers lined up on the starting platform to the roar of the crowd.* Synonym: starting pontoon.

Starting pontoon (noun): A dock or floating structure where the swimmers stand to start an open water race. *The starting pontoon was anchored to the ocean floor to create a stable start for the swimmers.* Synonym: starting platform.

Stick and stay (verb): To draft off of another swimmer for an extended period during a race. *The coach advised the swimmer to stick and stay with the race favorite for the first 5 kilometers.* Synonyms: draft, stay with him/her, drag and slipstream.

Strung out (verb): To become separated from one another during an open water race, especially in the latter stages of the race after the swimmers have been swimming together in a pack. *After the midway point, the top swimmer increased her pace causing the lead pack to get strung out.*

Surface chop (noun): Wave action at the surface of the water caused by wind. Small, frequent waves that are irritating to open water swimmers because they impede forward movement and can reduce visibility from the surface of the water. *The surface chop was the reason why he went a bit off-course.* Synonyms: chop and whitewater.

Surge (noun): A sudden increase in speed to break-away from one's competitors. *He put on a final surge in an attempt to win the close race.* Synonyms: breakaway, sprint. Also (verb): To speed up or increase the pace in order to create separation from the rest of the field. *The swimmer was surging around the last turn buoy.* Synonyms: sprint ahead, swim faster, put on a spurt, pick up the pace, drop the hammer, increase the tempo, drop the field, make a move and sprint.

Swell (noun): A long wave or series of waves in the ocean that move continuously without breaking. *The swells caused the swimmers to rise and fall during the first half of the race.* [Middle English *swellen*, from Old English *swellan*]. Synonym: wave.

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

Swimtrekking (verb): To swim along coasts and shorelines with the support of specific equipment that is useful or necessary for a long journey in the sea. *While swimtrekking, the young men tied a hydro-dynamically watertight and waterproof packs to their waists and used wetsuits, fins, masks and snorkels.*

Swimtrekker (noun): A person who swims with equipment in a hydro-dynamically pack. *Swimtrekkers traverse the open water with a waterproof pack that contains all the items useful and necessary for their journey in the open water.*

Tack 'n Turn (verb): A race tactic when a swimmer veers a competitor slightly off-course and then shifts direction quickly to gain a better position or angle to a turn buoy, feeding pontoon or finish. *The leader tacked and turned the second swimmer to his advantage.*

10K (noun): 6.2 miles or 10 kilometers, the standard distance of the Olympic marathon swim. *The swimmers will swim four loops in the rowing basin during the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim.*

Third spacing (noun): In human physiology, extracellular fluids are distributed between the interstitial compartment (i.e. tissue) and intravascular compartment (i.e. plasma) in an approximately 75%-25% ratio. Third spacing is the physiological concept that body fluids may collect in a "third" body compartment that isn't normally perfused with fluids. For example, open water swimmer's body to appear waterlogged or swollen after a long swim when fluid is trapped in the interstitial spaces in the brain, lungs, abdomen and extremities. Third spacing can be caused by a loss of electrolytes. In turn, this results in extracellular fluids going out of the blood vessels and into the skin tissue that normally is not perfused with fluids. *The marathon swimmer looked soft and pudgy when he exited the water after his crossing of the English Channel.*

Three-wide (noun): 3 swimmers swimming side-by-side during a race. *There was a three-wide coming around the last turn buoy.* [Origin: modern-day NASCAR term].

Throw a Curve (noun): a race tactic used when a swimmer purposefully swims in a zigzag or curved pattern in order to attempt to lose a swimmer who is drafting off of them. *The leader is throwing a curve to the rest of the pack.*

Tide (noun): The periodic rise and fall of the waters of the ocean and its inlets, produced by the attraction of the moon and sun, and occurring about every 12 hours. The inflow, outflow, or current of water at any given place resulting from the waves of tides. *The race director took the tides into account when he decided to start the race in the early morning.* [Origin: bef. 900; ME (n.); OE *tīd* time, hour; c. D *tijd*, G *Zeit*, ON *tīth*; akin to TIME].
Synonyms: stream, flood tide and current.

Time Limit (noun): The maximum amount of time that is allowed for swimmers to remain in the water after the first swimmer finishes the race. Time limits apply from the finish time of the first swimmer. *He was pulled from the race and had to exit from the water when the time limit was reached 30 minutes after the first swimmer finished.*

Toss and Turn (noun): The fourth rule of feeding when the swimmer quickly discards the fuel (e.g., gel pack) or hydration (e.g., water cup or bottle) received from his/her coach and immediately turns over on his/her stomach to begin swimming after a momentary feeding stop. *The swimmer was ready to toss and turn after quickly gulping down the Gatorade.*

Touch pad (noun): Finish plates placed vertically (i.e., perpendicular to the surface of the water) at the end of

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

open water races that identify the race finish and can be electronically tied to the official timing system. *The two swimmers slapped the touch pad at nearly the exact same time.* Synonyms: Finish, finish pads and finish line.

Trade winds (noun): The most persistent wind system on Earth. The prevailing pattern of easterly surface winds found in the tropics near the Earth's equator that blow predominantly from the northeast in the Northern Hemisphere and from the southeast in the Southern Hemisphere, strengthening during the winter and when the Arctic oscillation is in its warm phase. *When the trade winds came up, the channel swim became extremely difficult due to the whitecaps.* Synonym: trades.

Transponder (noun): light, waterproof timing devices with GPS capabilities that are worn on both wrists of swimmers at FINA-sanctioned races. *The swimmers were given transponders before the race by the officials.* Synonym: timing chips.

Triple Crown (noun): Open water swimming's equivalent of the Triple Crown of Thoroughbred Racing. Completion of the Triple Crown includes three successful swims: (1) across the English Channel between England and France, (2) across the Catalina Channel in Southern California, U.S.A., and (3) the Manhattan Island Marathon Swim, a 28.5-mile circumnavigation around New York City.

The Irish Triple Crown is the completion of the Irish Channel, the English Channel and the Catalina Channel.

The Kiwi Triple Crown is the completion of the Cook Strait, the English Channel and the Catalina Channel.

The California Triple Crown is the completion of one of the Santa Barbara Channels, the English Channel and the Catalina Channel or the Farallon Islands swim to San Francisco, the English Channel and the Catalina Channel.

The Hawaiian Triple Crown is the completion of one of the Hawaiian Island Channels (e.g., Moloka'i Channel), the English Channel and the Catalina Channel.

The Japanese Triple Crown is the completion of the Japanese Triple Crown, the English Channel and the Catalina Channel.

The African Triple Crown is the completion of the Strait of Gibraltar, the English Channel and the Catalina Channel.

The Australian Triple Crown is the completion of the Rottneest Channel, the English Channel and the Catalina Channel.

Turn buoy (noun): A distinctively marked or colored float in the water, anchored to mark the course for swimmers. Turn buoys are directional in nature and must be passed on a specific side of the body as race instructions dictate. *There are four turn buoys throughout the race course that the swimmers must go around to finish.* [Origin: 1425–75; late ME boye a float]. Synonym: can, float.

Two-way (noun): A solo or relay swim back and forth across a channel, lake, river or other body of water under the traditional rules of marathon swimming. *The swimmer set a two-way record across the Cook Strait.* Synonym: double-crossing.

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

Unescorted swim (noun): An event where swimmers compete without a designated support craft (e.g., kayak, paddleboard, escort boat). However, mutual support for the entire field of swimmers can be made available through the use of safety craft and feed stations along the course. *The athlete did her first unescorted swim in Greece in the 5K race.*

Unsportsmanlike conduct (noun): Inappropriate or unprofessional acts committed by swimmers during an open water race that can lead to a warning or disqualification by the referee or that are not in the spirit of the competition. These acts can include obstruction, interference or making intentional contact with another swimmer that can lead to a warning or disqualification by the lead referee, whether made by the swimmer or the swimmer's escort boat or crew. *The swimmer was disqualified for his unsportsmanlike conduct because he swam over the shoulders of his competitor at the finish.* Synonym: unsporting behavior.

Vaseline® (noun): A well-known trademark used for a brand of petroleum jelly that is used to coat the skin of swimmers, especially to friction points (e.g., underarms, inside thighs, chin, neck and swimsuit areas) in order to prevent chafing: *The swimmer applied a thin coating of Vaseline® around his neck.* [1872, trademark for an ointment made from petroleum and marketed by Chesebrough Manufacturing Co., coined from Ger. Wasser "water" + Gk. elaion "oil" + scientific-sounded ending -ine. Robert Chesebrough was of the opinion that petroleum was a product of the underground decomposition of water]. Synonym: grease. Similar products include Vaseline®, lanolin, TriSlide, BodyGlide, PAM, bag balm, Channel grease and Cramer Skin Lube.

Veer off course (verb): to swim not on the optimal path along an open water race. *The swimmers were pushed by the strong currents and were gradually veering off course.*

V-shaped pack (noun): When a group of swimmers takes a form of the letter "V" during a race. *During the long straightaway, the lead swimmers formed a V-shaped pack.*

Veer off course (verb): to swim not on the optimal path along an open water race. *The swimmers were pushed by the strong currents and were gradually veering off course.*

Wake (noun): The track of waves left by an escort boat, Jet Ski or other watercraft moving through the water or across the path of swimmers in an open water race or solo swim. *The swimmers were bothered by the wake of the escort boat.* [Origin: akin to Middle Low German *wake*, Norwegian dialect *vok*]

Water chill factor (noun): Apparent temperature felt on the exposed skin of a swimmer due to water temperature, air temperature, humidity, wind speed, amount of sunshine, cloud cover, level of exhaustion and thickness of swimwear and head coverings. It incorporates heat transfer theory and heat loss from the body to its surroundings. *The water chill factor was so low that the swimmers decided to wear a neoprene cap.*

Water comfort index (noun): The comfort factor useful for swimmers in any body of water ranging from extremely hot (apparent temperature of 85°F and higher) to uncomfortably hot to warm to comfortable to cool to uncomfortably cold to extremely cold (apparent temperature under 45°F). *The race director told the athletes to expect a water comfort index in the uncomfortably hot range.*

Wetsuit event (noun): Events that allow the use of wetsuits due to low water temperatures. Swimmers using wetsuits usually do not compete against swimmers without wetsuits for awards; however, all swimmers may start together depending on the race. *The swimmer entered the wetsuit event at the RCP Tiburon Mile.*

Whiteboard (noun): A smooth, glossy sheet of white plastic that can be written on with a colored pen or

Open Water Swimming Dictionary

erasable marker in the manner of a blackboard. The white plastic is used by coaches or referees to provide instructions to swimmers during an open water race. *The coach wrote '2K to go' on the whiteboard to show his swimmer.* Synonym: chalk board.

Whitecaps (noun): Small ocean surface waves that break offshore due to the wind that are irritating to open water swimmers because they tend to impede forward progress and reduce visibility. *The winds picked up in the afternoon leading to an ocean full of whitecaps.* Synonyms: whitewater, surface chop, chop, small waves and turbulence.

Wild swimmer (noun): An individual who swim in natural or man-made bodies of open water. *During his drive across the country, he wanted to become a wild swimmer and go for a swim across 100 different bodies of water.*

Wild swimming (verb): Swimming or playing in natural or man-made bodies of open water including oceans, lakes, rivers, bays, lidos, canals, dams and reservoirs, performed solely for the pleasure of doing the swim. Wild swimming differs from free swimming in that wild swimming can be of any distance where free swimming is generally at least one kilometer in distance. *He loves wild swimming whenever his family went camping in the countryside.* Synonyms: open water swimming, free swimming.

Williwaw (noun): A sudden blast of wind descending from a mountainous coast to the sea caused by the descent of cold, dense air from the snow and ice fields of coastal mountains in high latitudes, accelerated by the force of gravity (e.g., in the Strait of Magellan, the Aleutian Islands and the coastal fjords of the Alaskan Panhandle). *The swimmers were fearful of the dreaded williwaw during their solo swim in Chile.* Synonyms: outflow wind, squamish wind, piteraq (Greenland), katabatic wind.

Winter swimming (verb): Swimming in a body of water during winter that may or may not involve freezing water, depending on the geographical location and the time of year. *It was a challenge, but the swimmers went winter swimming in the mountain lake during their vacation to Canada.* Synonyms: ice swimming, cold-water swimming, extreme swimming.

Yellow card (noun): A yellow-colored penalty card that indicates an official warning to a swimmer due to unsportsmanlike conduct or an infraction of the rules during an open water race. *The head referee gave a yellow card to the swimmer who cut across the back of his competitor.* Synonym: warning.

Yellow-carded (verb): To be warned by a referee during an open water race. *The swimmer was yellow-carded by the referee after his unsportsmanlike conduct.* Synonyms: warned and given a warning.

Open Water Swimming Circumnavigation around World

There are numerous great circumnavigation (around-the-island) swims around the world.

Most of the swims have yet to be attempted, planned and discovered. Here is a very short list of the some of the most popular circumnavigations around the world. If your favorite is not listed, please email us with your swims.



1. Manhattan Island

- Location: Around Manhattan Island in New York City, New York, U.S.A.
- Course: Counter-clockwise circumnavigation of Manhattan Island, starting and finishing near Wall Street
- Distance: 28.5 miles (45.8K)
- Date of Annual Race: July
- Description: Manhattan Island Marathon Swim is limited to 25 solo swimmers and 18 relay teams that start and finish at Battery Park City. Race sells out in 45 minutes. Race first held in 1927. Substantial surface chop and strong tidal pull are possible. Water temperature varies between 64-67°F (17-19°C). Salt water around Manhattan Island may also include random jetsam and flotsam. A Qualifying Swim must be completed before application will be accepted. The premier event of the NYC Swim Series that conducts numerous other open water events and has attracted over 14,000 participants in more than 110 events.



2. Alcatraz Island

- Location: San Francisco Bay, California, U.S.A.
- Course: From Aquatic Park near Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco to Alcatraz Island and back
- Distance: 3.25 miles (5.2K)
- Date of Annual Race: July
- Description: Swim Around the Rock requires extensive open water experience due to the cold water (under 60°F or 15.5°C), changing tides and fast currents, but spectacular view of the Golden Gate Bridge, Fisherman's Wharf and the San Francisco downtown skyline will delight the swimmers throughout the event.



Open Water Swimming Circumnavigation around World

3. Pennock Island Challenge

- Location: In Ketchikan, Alaska, U.S.A.
- Course: Around Pennock Island in the Tongass Narrows
- Distance: 8.2 miles (13.2K)
- Date of Annual Race: August
- Description: The Pennock Island Challenge is a current-assisted course sheltered from large surf everywhere except the sound end. Water temperature ranges from mid-50s°F to low 60s°F (12.7 to 16.6°C). Air temperature will range from the mid-60s°F to mid 80s°F (18-29°C). Swimmers can enter as solo and as members of a relay. Wetsuits are allowed, but will have their own awards category. It is a fundraiser for the American Diabetes Association.



4. Sandycove Island

- Location: Kinsale, County Cork, Ireland
- Course: Counter-clockwise circumnavigation around the island
- Distance: Up to 1.25 miles (2K) depending on how close one swims to the island
- Date of Annual Race: September with training swims made from late winter when water can be 45°F to late summer
- Description: The Old Head of Kinsales shelters Sandycove Island from the prevalent westerly winds. Swim at high tide for the easiest swim. Low tide exposes hidden reefs and a beach at the base of the slipway. Medium currents at mid-tide can present problems for slower swimmers. Nearly 150 swims are scheduled each year at the primary training spot for open water swimmers and triathletes. It is an excellent training location for those preparing for an English Channel attempt. Clean crisp water with sunken reefs and waving sea plants clearly visible.



5. Hong Kong

- Location: Hong Kong
- Course: From Stanley Peninsula to Deepwater Bay, around the clean and beautiful waters of Hong Kong's south side
- Distance: 9 miles (14.5K)
- Date of Annual Race: October
- Description: The Clean Half Marathon Swimming includes a solo swim and a 5-person relay (with 20-minute legs) around stunning Hong Kong Island in 71 – 81°F (22 – 27°C) waters through significant chop and backwash from huge rock cliffs.

Open Water Swimming Circumnavigation around World

6. Starnes Island

- Location: Lake Travis in Austin, Texas, U.S.A.
- Course: 1-mile swim in 78°F (25.5°C) from Volente Beach around Starnes Island and back to start
- Distance: 1 mile (0.62K)
- Date of Annual Race: October
- Description: Volente Beach Waterpark Open Water Family Gala is part of the American Swimming Association open water swimming series in and around the Austin, Texas area.



7. Island of Key West

- Location: Key West, Florida, U.S.A.
- Course: Circumnavigation around Key West, the southernmost tip of Florida
- Distance: 12.5 miles (20K)
- Date of Annual Race: June
- Description: The FKCC Swim Around Key West is held in beautiful, shallow, generally calm warm waters (85°F or 29.4°C) with the bottom of the ocean visible throughout the course. Race includes a solo swim, a 2-person relay, a 3-person relay and a 6-person relay (mixed and all-female) and is organized by Florida Keys Community College.

8. Swim Around Key West

- Location: Key West, Florida, U.S.A.
- Course: Clockwise course around Key West, the southernmost tip of Florida
- Distance: 12.5 miles
- Date of Annual Race: June
- Description: The original Swim Around Key West is held in beautiful, shallow, generally calm warm waters (85°F or 29.4°C) with the bottom of the ocean visible throughout the course. Abundant marine life includes Conch shells, manna rays, seaweed, sting rays, sea turtles, very docile nurse sharks and colorful tropical fish. Race includes a solo swim, a 2-person relay and a 3-person relay.



9. Absecon Island

- Location: Absecon Island, Atlantic City, New Jersey, U.S.A.
- Course: Demanding swim with strong tides and current, varying conditions and water temperatures that can range from 55°F (12.7°C) in the open ocean to 85°F (29.4°C) in the back bay.

Open Water Swimming Circumnavigation around World

- Distance: 22.5 miles (37K)
- Traditional Date of Race (no longer held): August
- Description: The Atlantic City Around-the-Island Marathon Swim was a traditionally one of the best professional marathon swims in the world, held 54 times since 1954, annually attracting the world's best professional swimmers. It has been called the hardest race in the world because conditions vary so greatly. Escort boats are rowed by local lifeguards.



10. Popoia Island

- Location: Off of Kailua Beach, Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.
- Course: Local swims around a low-lying uninhabited island near one of the best beaches in Hawaii. The island is a bird sanctuary and is called “Flat Island” by the locals.
- Distance: 1.2 miles (2K)
- Date: Throughout the year
- Description: Kailua Beach Park is always considered one of the top beaches in the world on the northern side of Oahu. Clean white sand beach with warm tropical water up to 80°F (26.6°C). The island has holes where sea birds make their nests. Parking is available at Kailua Beach Park, about a 20-minute drive from Waikiki.



11. Manana Island

- Location: Off of Makapuu Beach, Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.
- Course: Challenging, potentially dangerous swim around an incredibly gorgeous uninhabited seabird sanctuary island near one of the most popular beaches in Hawaii. The island is near one of the most famous bodysurfing beaches on Oahu and is called “Rabbit Island” by the locals.
- Distance: 1.2 miles (2K)
- Date: Throughout the year
- Description: The Makapuu Beach Park nearly always has rough water conditions and strong currents and sharks are an ever-present danger. Surfers and kayakers have been attacked by sharks in this area and extreme caution is strongly advised. If no experienced and vigilant escorts are available, swimmers are advised to avoid swimming in this area.

Open Water Swimming Circumnavigation around World



12. Mokulua Islands

- Location: off of Kailua Beach Park, Oahu, Hawaii, U.S.A.
- Course: Circumnavigation around an incredibly beautiful tropical twin islands off of one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. Commonly known as the Twin Islands, the Moku Nui and Moku Iki are designated seabird sanctuaries that are popular among kayakers.
- Distance: 1.5 miles (1.2K)
- Date: Throughout the year
- Description: Crystal clear azure blue waters and lack of waves makes this an easy swim. Finish on a powdery white sand beach that has been designate as the Best Beach in America. Area is protected by an off-shore coral reef, but the danger of marine life is always present. If no experienced and vigilant escorts are available, swimmers are advised to avoid swimming in this area.



13. Santa Catalina Island

- Location: Rocky island 21 miles (34K) off of the coast of Southern California, U.S.A.
- Course: Extremely demanding swim in cold water with strong currents and potentially high waves and abundant marine life. Island is 22 miles (35K) long and 8 miles (13K) wide.
- Distance: At least 50 miles (80.5K)
- Date: Extraordinarily rare attempts can be made from July to September
- Description: Population of island is under 4,000 people. Threat of sharks is present. Only one circumnavigation has been authenticated (Cindy Cleveland of Seal Beach, California).



14. Coronado Island

- Location: Island between the Pacific Ocean and San Diego Bay, California, U.S.A.
- Course: Demanding swim in relatively cold water with potentially strong tides and surf
- Distance: 11.7 miles (28.5K)
- Date: Races are no longer held

Open Water Swimming Circumnavigation around World



15. Isle of Wight

- Location: Island in the English Channel between 3-5 miles from the south coast of Great Britain
- Course: Demanding swim in cold water with strong currents
- Distance: 56 miles (90K)
- Date: Attempts can be made in July or August
- Description: Known for its natural beauty, the Isle of Wight has been a holiday resort since Victorian times. First completed by Kevin Murphy of Great Britain in 1971 in 26 hours and 51 minutes.



16. Yonaguni Island

- Location: Okinawa, Japan (near Taiwan)
- Course: Demanding swim around incredibly beautiful tropical island near Japan and the westernmost point of Japan
- Distance: 18 miles (29K)
- Date: Attempts generally made in spring or late fall, preferably October
- Description: Population of island is under 1,700 people. Thousands of hammerhead sharks congregate near tips of island within view of swimmers. Water temperature about 80°F (26.6°C) where it was first completed in 1993 by Steven Munatones of Huntington Beach, California in 7 hours and 8 minutes.



17. Round Christiansborg Swim

- Location: Copenhagen, Denmark
- Course: Five 2K loops in Fredericksholm's Canal around the island that houses the palace of the Danish Parliament. Swimmers will swim through canals alongside Holmen Church, the Danish Parliament, the Danish Ministry of Culture, royal riding stables and near the central shopping area of Copenhagen.
- Distance: 6.2 miles (10K)

Open Water Swimming Circumnavigation around World

- Date of Annual Race: August
- Description: The Round Christiansborg Swim is a popular Danish swim for amateurs and a FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup event in 2009. Amateurs swim in the morning and the pro swimmers start the FINA World Cup race in the afternoon. Water temperature is between 64-72°F (18-22°C)



18. Estero Island

- Location: Fort Myers, Florida, U.S.A.
- Course: 25K loop around Estero Island on the west coast of Florida
- Distance: 16 miles (25K)
- Date: June
- Description: Recent site of the Open Water Festival and USA Swimming National 25K Championships. It is a warm-water swim in the clear waters of Florida. The Open Water Festival that has numerous events from the 1-mile Dash for Cash to the 10K.



19. Trunk Island, Crow Island, Rabbit Island and Collins Island

- Location: Harrington Sounds, Bermuda
- Course: Stunningly gorgeous swim around several small islands in Harrington Sound
- Distance: 6.2 miles (10K)
- Date of Annual Race: October
- Description: Longest race in the annual Bermuda Round the Sound Swim with other 0.8K, 2K, 4K and 7.25K swims and an international field. Swim in 78°F (25.5°C) clear waters around a dramatic Caribbean coastline 650 miles east of North Carolina. Bermuda was voted the Best Island in the Caribbean/Atlantic region by Condé Nast Traveler magazine.



Open Water Swimming Circumnavigation around World

20. Mercer Island

- Location: Island located in Lake Washington in between Seattle and the headquarters of Microsoft in Redmond, Washington, U.S.A.
- Course: Incredible views of the natural beauty of the American Northwest
- Distance: Approximately 16 miles (25K)
- Date: July or August
- Description: Mercer Island is the most populated island in a lake in the Americas and is a calm swim unless the winds come up. Water temperature is in the mid 70°s.



21. Seward Island

- Location: Island located in Lake Washington in between Seattle and the Microsoft headquarters in Redmond, Washington, U.S.A.
- Course: Incredible views of an old growth forest and the natural beauty of the Seattle area
- Distance: 3.2 miles (5K)
- Date: July or August
- Description: Relatively easy, quite comfortable and extremely enjoyable swim with water in the mid 70°s during summer.



22. Island of Jersey

- Location: Island located in the English Channel approximately 14 miles (22K) from Normandy, France and approximately 100 miles (162K) south of Great Britain
- Course: Scenic terrain ranging from long sandy bays to rugged cliffs
- Distance: Approximately 43.5 miles (70K) of coastline
- Date: July or August
- Description: Jersey is the largest and southernmost of the Channel Islands. First circumnavigation swim successfully completed in 1969; fastest circumnavigation swim is held by Alison Streeter, the Queen of the Channel, in 9 hours and 53 minutes. Water temperature is 64°F (17.7°C) and the swim is tidal assisted if timed right.

Open Water Swimming Circumnavigation around World



23. Valentia Island

- Location: Island located off the western coast of Ireland
- Course: Scenic Irish terrain that requires careful navigation due to tides and currents
- Distance: 16+ miles (25.7K) of coastline
- Date: July and August
- Description: First circumnavigation swim successfully completed in July 2008 by Ned Denison in 8 hours and 52 minutes. Jellyfish can be abundant when water temperature rises above 55°F (13°C). Numerous fish species and basking shark are popular among fishermen in the area. Water temperature expected to be under 60°F (15°C). Circumnavigation should be carefully planned for optimal tidal assistance.



24. Mackinac Island

- Location: Island located at the eastern end of the Straits of Mackinac in Lake Huron, one of the Great Lakes of North America.
- Course: Normally a flat-water swim unless strong wind conditions occur
- Distance: 12 miles around the 3.8 square miles or 9.8 square kilometer island
- Date of Annual Race: Great Turtle Relay Swim Around Mackinac Island is held in July
- Description: First circumnavigation completed in 2004 by Dick Buist, Dennis Barber, Dave Newton and Ed Gilde completed the first circumnavigation relay swim in 5 hours and 11 minutes. A National Historic Landmark, the island is small and part of the state of Michigan and is can be done "carbon-neutral style" (i.e., relay swimmers rotate in the water every 20 minutes. When it is not their turn to swim, the swimmers walk around the island. Each relay member swims for 20 minutes and then walks for 60 minutes until they finish the approximately 11-12 mile circumnavigation of Mackinac Island) in the 63°F (17°C) water.



Open Water Swimming Circumnavigation around World

25. **Gaspar Grande** (also known as **Gaspar Island**)

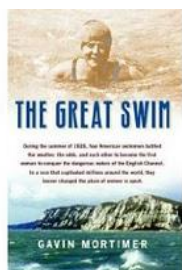
- Location: Island of Trinidad & Tobago that lies in the Bocas del Dragón (Dragon's Mouth) between Trinidad and Venezuela.
- Course: Beautiful ocean course in the Caribbean Sea. Gasparee Island is the most developed of the Boca Islands
- Distance: 5.6K
- Date of Annual Race: Linden Scott Swim is held in January
- Description: Beautiful ocean swim



26. **Bowen Island**

- Location: In Howe Sound near Vancouver in British Columbia, Canada
- Course:
- Distance: 20 miles
- Date of Annual Race: Linden Scott Swim is held in January
- Description: Four people have successfully made the circumnavigation in 63-66°F waters. A popular tourist destination, Bowen Island offers stunning vistas for a small number of inhabitants.

Open Water Swimming Books and Movies



The Great Swim by Gavin Mortimer. *In the summer of 1926, four American women race to be the first female to swim across the English Channel.*

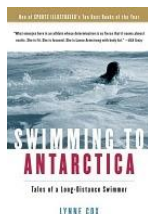


America's Girl: The Incredible Story of How Swimmer Gertrude Ederle Changed the Nation by Tim Dahlberg. *This well-researched biography traces Gertrude's development as a competitive swimmer and pioneering channel swimmers.*



Nothing Great is Easy by Des Renford with Ian Heads. *An engaging autobiography that covers an amazingly colorful life of an accomplished marathon swimmer who retired as the King of the Channel with 19 crossings (19 attempts and 19 successes).*

Wind, Waves, and Sunburn: A Brief History of Marathon Swimming by Conrad Wennerberg. *Considered to be one of the most authoritative accounts of top channel swimmers throughout history and professional marathon swimmers focusing on the stars from the 1950's to 1970's.*



Swimming to Antarctica: Tales of a Long-Distance Swimmer by Lynne Cox. *A classic, colorfully descriptive sports memoir of arguably one of history's greatest swimming adventurers.*

Open Water Swimming Books and Movies

Ice Breaker: The Freezing Story of Lynne Cox by John Diconsiglio. *The life and open water swimming exploits of Lynne Cox, one of history's greatest aquatic adventurers.*

History of Open-Water Marathon Swimming by Capt. Tim Johnson. *An extraordinarily detailed historical of marathon swims and swimmers from dozens of countries.*

Young Woman and the Sea - How Trudy Ederle Conquered the English Channel and Inspired the World by Glenn Stout. *A historical perspective of the first crossing of the English Channel by a woman.*

Triathlon Swimming Made Easy - The Total Immersion Way for Anyone to Master Open-Water Swimming by Terry Laughlin. *Words of wisdom from a masterful stroke technique and popular speaker aimed at triathletes to help make swimming the best part of their triathlon.*



Swim to Glory: The Story of Marilyn Bell and the Lakeshore Swimming Club by Ron McAllister. *Provides the rich history of Marilyn Bell's historic 1954 crossing of Lake Ontario and her association with Gus Ryder and the Lakeshore Swimming Club and its domination of the 1954 Atlantic City professional swim.*

Ultra Swimming by Claudia B. Manley. *A description of the history of the sport together with safety considerations and physical and mental training, and training tips.*



The Art of Swimming by Matthew Webb. *Published in 1876, the historical treatise covers swimming techniques and other aquatic exploits of the 19th century.*

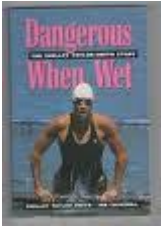
The Crossing: The Curious Story of the First Man to Swim the English Channel by Kathy Watson. *The colorful story of Matthew Webb, the first person to swim the English Channel and a natural showman, and his physically agonizing crossing.*

It's Cold in the Channel by Sam Rockett. *Provides an excellent history of swimming in the English Channel swimming up to the 1950's including the professional races organized by Billy Butlin and the Daily Mail.*

Modern Long Distance Swimming by Gerald Forsberg. *An authoritative insight to the world of open water swimming over 50 years ago written by a former English Channel record holder.*

Open Water Swimming Books and Movies

Long Distance Swimming by Gerald Forsberg. *A colorful description of channel swimming and open water swimming published in 1957 that remains modern and insightful even for contemporary marathon swimmers.*



Dangerous When Wet - The Shelley Taylor-Smith Story by Shelley Taylor-Smith and Ian Cockerill. *The entertaining and educational autobiography of the Australian world champion swimmer with seven consecutive world titles and several head-to-head victories over the best men in the sport.*

Alone On A Wide Wide Sea by Bob McCormack. *Experienced ocean swimmer tells about his six most exciting swims.*

Captain Webb and 100 years of Channel Swimming by Margaret A. Jarvis. *Includes detailed accounts of English Channel swims by Captain Webb and others during the first 100 years in addition to numerous photographs of the swimmers and the history behind the formation of the Channel Swimming Association.*

Fair Sport - The History of Sport at the Canadian National Exhibition, 1879-1977 Inclusive by A.W. "Bill" Leveridge. *Includes the history of marathon swimming greats like George Young and Ernst Vierkoetter and events like the Wrigley Trophy and the Canadian National Exhibition marathon swim.*

Dover Solo by Marcia Cleveland. *The story of an American woman's incredible journey of discovery, preparation and training for her English Channel crossing.*



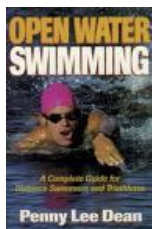
A cada brazada el azul interminable (With each stroke, the endless blue) by Antonio Argüelles and Nora Toledano *describes their crossings that they equate to a survival in the sea of life.*

The Man Who Swam the Amazon - 3274 Miles on the World's Deadliest River by Matthew Mohlke. *A gripping and inspirational story of the perseverance and passion of Martin Strel's adventure down the Amazon.*

Marilyn Bell: The Heart-Stopping Tale of Marilyn's Record-Breaking Swim by Patrick Tivy. *Describes Marilyn Bell's swim across Lake Ontario.*

The Crossing: The curious story of the first man to swim the English Channel by Kathy Watson. *Biography of Captain Matthew Webb and his crossing of the English Channel.*

Open Water Swimming Books and Movies



Open Water Swimming by Penny Lee Dean. *An authoritative how-to book on drills, techniques, training methodologies and insight from the former English Channel record holder.*

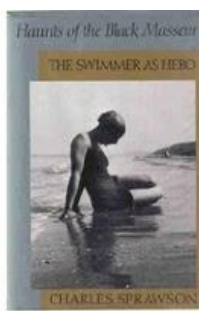
Marathon: The World of the Long-Distance Athlete by Gail Campbell.



Sage Island by Samantha Warwick. *Novelization of the 1927 Wrigley Marathon Ocean Swim across the Catalina Channel as told through the eyes of a swimmer trapped in the shadow of Gertrude Ederle.*

Sports Nutrition for Endurance Athletes by Monique Ryan *with a chapter for marathon swimmers.*

Nine Ways to Cross a River, Midstream Reflections on Swimming and Getting There from Here by Akiko Busch *about her swim across the Hudson River in 2001.*



Haunts of the Black Masseur, The Swimmer as a Hero by Charles Sprawson *explores the heart and mind of an open water swimmer.*

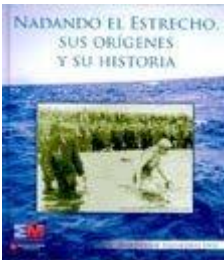
Conquest of the English Channel by Thomas Hetzel *who swam across the English Channel 8 times within a 10-year period from 1967-1977.*

Crossing, The Extraordinary Story of the First Man to Swim the English Channel by Kathy Watson *about Captain Matthew Webb's crossing in 1875.*

Open Water Swimming Books and Movies

Other Shores by Diana Nyad. *Autobiography that shares the mindset of a professional marathon swimmer including stories behind her swims across Lake Ontario and around Manhattan Island, and plans for a Cuba-to-Florida swim are all covered in this book.*

Two Faces of the English Channel, The Untold Story by Paul Jagasich.



Nadando El Estrecho, Sus Orígenes Y Su Historia (Swimming the Strait, Its Origin and History) by **International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame** honoree **Montserrat Tresserras Dou**. *A 287-page hard cover book is filled with hundreds of great photographs of swimmers in the Strait of Gibraltar (Estrecho de Gibraltar in Spanish) that separates Spain from Morocco, Africa.*



Wild Swim by Kate Rew, *founder of the Outdoor Swimming Society, waxes poetically about open water swimming with a magical, lyrical ability to colorfully describe the beauty of the open water.*



Open Water Swimming in South Africa by Tony Sellmeyer *is an inspirational journal that includes articles, records, history and captivating stories from open water swimmers in South Africa.*

Fair Sport: The History of Sport at the Canadian National Exhibition, 1879-1977 Inclusive by A.W. "Bill" Leveridge *with stories about George Young, Ernst Vierkoetter, Herman Willemse, Abou Heif, Cliff Lumsdon, Greta Andersen and Judith de Nys.*

Captain Webb and 100 years of Channel Swimming by Margaret A. Jarvis.

Open Water Swimming Books and Movies

Take It to the Limit by Julie Ridge, *an actress and endurance athlete was the first to swim twice around Manhattan Island, provides a guide to maximize athletic performance and personal satisfaction from that performance.*

Conquering the English Channel by George H. Pumphrey.



Welcome, a French movie released in March 2009, is a story about a young Kurdish refugee in France who immigrates to England by swimming across the English Channel. The adventure across the English Channel is interspersed between two love stories and a struggle against immigration laws, red tape and enforcement.



Agua is a movie about a former open water swimming champion who was wrongly accused of doping in the pro 57K Santa Fe - Coronda Marathon and who tries to re-gain his title and clear his name. World marathon swimming champion and Olympic swimmer Edith van Dijk plays herself in the movie as do other actual professional marathon swimmers.



Welcome, a powerful and subtle tale of Frenchman and an illegal immigrant determined to get to England



On A Clear Day, a British movie about a Glasgow shipbuilder, Frank Redmond, a no-nonsense 55-year-old

Open Water Swimming Books and Movies

working-class man, suddenly finds himself laid off. For the first time in his life, he is without a job or a sense of direction, and he's too proud to ask for guidance.

Two Swimmers, a 23-minute British documentary released in 2007 that explores the bond between an athlete and his coach as they attempt the English Channel in 2005 and the dramatic events that follow.

Longest Solo Swims in the World



The longest authenticated continuous five non-stop lake swims on record include the following:

1. **Abdel-Latiff Abo-Heif** of Egypt, voted the greatest marathon swimmer of the 20th century, completed a 60-mile professional solo lake race across Lake Michigan on August 23-24, 1963 during the Jim Moran's Lake Michigan Swim Challenge from Chicago, Illinois to Benton Harbor-St. Joseph, Michigan. Abo-Heif finished in 34 hours and 38 minutes.
2. **Ted Erikson**, an inductee in the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame, finished the same 60-mile swim in 37 hours and 31 minutes.
3. **Yuko Matsuzaki** (shown above), a former professional marathon swimmer from Japan, completed a 51.5-mile (83K) solo swim in 33 hours and 25 minutes in Lake Cane in Orlando, Florida on September 13th, 2008. Yuko's swim can be seen [here](#). Her hands and feet are shown above as an example of Third Spacing.
4. **Greta Andersen** finished a 31-hour, 50-mile professional solo lake race from Chicago, Illinois to Kenosha, Wisconsin, the 1962 version of the Jim Moran's Lake Michigan Swim Challenge.
5. **Ted Erikson** also finished that 1962 50-mile Lake Michigan race in 35 hours and 45 minutes.

The longest solo continuous marathon swims performed in the ocean were completed by **Susie Maroney** and **Diana Nyad**.

Susie Maroney swam 111.8 miles (180K) from Cuba to Florida in May, 1997 (done in a shark cage), 58 miles (93.6K) from Mexico to Cuba in June, 1998 in 38 hours and 33 minutes (a recognized Guinness world record) and 99.4 miles (160K) from Jamaica to Cuba in September, 1999. Because her longer swims were done in a shark cage and wetsuit, they are not recognized by the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame for record purposes, although no one can argue the incredible physical and mental endurance that was demonstrated.

Diana Nyad swam 50 miles along the Great Barrier Reef in Australia and swam 102.5 miles (165K) from North Bimini, Bahamas to Juno Beach, Florida in 1972, but withdrew after 42 hours in a 1978 attempt from Cuba to Florida after swimming 99.7 miles (160K).

Note: solo continuous swims done in rivers were excluded from this list.

Higher Math for Open Water Swimmers



The mental aspect of competitive open water swimming cannot be downplayed. Not only do you have to think about the elements - winds, waves, currents - but you also have to strategize while you swim and make decisions about feeding, pacing, positioning and drafting relative to your competition.

The tactical skills of the world's best open water swimmers are always something to see.

When swimmers interested in competitive open water swimming ask us what it takes, we often recommend a focus on the Seven Essentials of Open Water Swimming (Base Training + Speed Training + Distance Tolerance + Race Specific Training + Skill Training + Open Water Acclimatization + Tactical Knowledge)

Whether in the pool or open water, we encourage competitive open water athletes to train their minds as well as their bodies. Some of the pool training sets that we recommend are based on prime numbers (e.g., 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 13, 17, 19, 23, 29, 31, 37, 41, 43, 47, 53, 59, etc.). So instead of doing traditional pool training intervals on easy-to-calculate figures like 1:00, 1:10, 1:15, 1:20 or 1:30, we occasionally do prime number sets where the intervals are 1:03, 1:17, 1:23, etc. Alternatively, we advocate intervals on 37.5, 42.5, 47.5, etc.

As any competitive pool swimmer will know, calculating your next send-off on a 42.5 interval for 50's or a 1:23 interval for 100's is not easy for most people. As a result, the athlete is constantly thinking and calculating in addition to maintaining proper stroke mechanics, trying to make the interval and getting your swim times. These prime number sets are taxing both mentally and physically - precisely what swimmers will face in competitive open water situations.

A few simple prime number sets for pool swimmers might include the following:

Hit the Primes: 8 x 100 @ 1:30, swim exactly at a 1:23 pace for #1, 1:19 pace for #2, 1:17 pace for #3, 1:13 pace for #4, 1:11 pace for #5, 1:07 pace for #6, 1:05 pace for #7 and 1:03 pace for #8.

Beat the Primes: 8 x 100 @ 1:30, swim faster than a 1:23 pace for #1, a 1:19 pace for #2, a 1:17 pace for #3, a 1:13 pace for #4, a 1:11 pace for #5, a 1:07 pace for #6, a 1:05 pace for #7 and a 1:03 pace for #8.

Descend Down: 10 x 50 with descending intervals. 1 x 50 @ 50 + 1 x 50 @ 47.5 + 1 x 50 @ 45 + 1 x 50 @ 42.5 + 1 x 50 @ 40 + 1 x 50 @ 37.5 + 1 x 50 @ 35 + 1 x 50 @ 32.5 + 1 x 50 @ 30 + 1 X 50 @ 27.5

This mental work teaches precise pace control and is very valuable for sharpening the mind which is a tool craftily by the world's best open water swimmers.

Is Open Water Swimming Near Its Tipping Point?



Perhaps not yet, but it is coming soon. We believe the tipping point has already occurred in Great Britain and other countries will soon follow. A tipping point is when the momentum for change becomes unstoppable and was defined by Morton Grodzins as the moment of critical mass...the threshold...the boiling point.

As we observe and report on all the different and amazing open water swimming events in 2010 - from unprecedented solo swims and the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim to Polar Bear swims and mass participation events of over 25,000 people - we believe open water swimming's moment of critical mass is coming soon.

In fact, it may have already occurred in Great Britain with its sudden rise in participants, events, media exposure, corporate sponsorship, new vendors and, most importantly, buzz and heroes/heroines of all ages, abilities and backgrounds.

If we look at any new sport over the last 30 years – triathlons, snowboarding or extreme sports like big-wave surfing – the model seems to be similar:

In phase 1, the niche hard-core enthusiasts do the sport...they enjoy the sport outside the established governing bodies and completely outside the radar of the establishment and media.

In phase 2, the sport slowly and quietly catches on, meandering and experimenting its way with rules, regulations, equipment, traditions and venues.

In phase 3, a growing number of early adopters, anxious to try something new, fun and challenging, start to create a little underground buzz.

In phase 4, something different, something unusual, something mind-boggling catches the public's attention. It could be someone like Julie Moss attempting to cross the finish line at the 1982 Hawaiian Ironman on American television. It could be like the rash of underground videos filmed in skateboard parks in Southern California. It could be like rumors of giant waves caught offshore. But something ignites the public's fancy and the media perks up.

In phase 5, the new sport takes off. Small vendors (e.g., Morey boogie boards, Burton snowboards, Quintaro Roo wetsuits, triathlon aerobars) step in where the established giants sleep. Media and event organizers start to feed the public's demand as cutting-edge race organizers and athletes take leadership roles in the sport and the new sport takes a life of its own.

The time is now. Enjoy our growth.

Photo of the Acapulco 5K International Swim.

America's Most Competitive Open Water Races



America's Top 10 Most Competitive Open Water Races based on the overall speed and experience of the top 10 men and women in each event.

1. RCP Tiburon Mile

The race offers the most money (US\$10,000) and draws the most accomplished field of any race in America. With a start on rugged Angel Island in San Francisco Bay, usually over 800 swimmers race to the shores of downtown Tiburon, just north of the Golden Gate Bridge in northern California.

The course is a cold-water, point-to-point swim of just slightly longer than 1 mile in September or October (depending on the tides). Besides Olympians, NCAA champions and world open water swimming champions from all over the world, swimmers face strong currents and relatively cold water (around 60°F). In addition to being a charity swim for the Special Olympics of Northern California, over 800 age-group, collegiate and masters swimmers compete with pool Olympians, English Channel swimmers and world open water champion swimmers from over 20 countries, including Russia, Australia, South Africa, Italy, Brazil, Mexico and Canada. US\$10,000 is awarded to overall male and female winners – a wonderfully exciting winner-take-all competition.

2. USA Swimming National 5K and 10K Open Water Swimming Championships

The race certainly has a lot riding on the outcome. With spots on the USA Swimming National Open Water Swimming Team available and international travel as the carrot stick, the fastest pool and open water swimmers lay it all out on the line. These Championships have been held in Ft. Myers, Florida over the past several years and have now relocated to Long Beach, California. The Championships are also open this year to athletes from any nation. In Long Beach, the top Canadian and Azerbaijan will swim shoulder-to-shoulder with the top Americans.

To represent one's country allows brings out the best in America's best and most competitive open water swimmers.

3. Waikiki Roughwater Swim

Honolulu is site of a really tough race to win with an international field of experienced open water swimmers coming from all over the world. As the inspiration behind the Hawaiian Ironman's 2.4-mile swim leg, the event starts at the foot of Diamond Head volcano and finishes at the Hilton Hawaiian Village.

An annual Labor Day extravaganza in early September, over 1,000 swimmers swim over beautiful coral

America's Most Competitive Open Water Races

beds and colorful marine life in a stunningly picturesque course. There is high surf and strong currents on occasion, depending on the conditions. With four decades of race experience under its belt, the venerable Waikiki Roughwater Swim Committee hosts a safe and memorable event from swimmers of all ages and backgrounds from dozens of countries and every U.S. state. In 1970, the race saw 4 women and 32 men swim across Waikiki and its reputation over the years is well-deserved.

4. Trans Tahoe Relay

The 11.5-mile masters relay runs across Lake Tahoe from Sand Harbor Beach in Nevada to Skylandia Beach, Lake Forest in California). The most popular masters swimming relay in the world, six-person relays fight it out at an altitude of more than 6,200 feet - and in cold-water (55-60°F).

The clear-water event requires a high level of physical fitness, but allows no wetsuits to be worn by the numerous accomplished pool and open water swimmers including world open water swimming champions, FINA World Cup and FINA Grand Prix pro swimmers, and NCAA and Olympic Trial qualifiers and top masters swimmers from dozens of states and countries.

5. Maui Channel Swim

A 9.6-mile, 6-person relay race across an incredibly gorgeous channel. Despite the spectacular setting, many swimmers go all-out in racing across the Au'au (Maui) Channel between the island of Lanai and the island of Maui in Hawaii.

The race starts at the north side of Lanai on an uninhabited stretch of beach and finishes on the south side of Maui by a stretch of luxurious resort hotels in early September. Six swimmers alternate 30-minute legs as they cross one of the most beautiful channels in the world and gaze upon five islands: Lanai, Maui, Molokai, Oahu and Hawaii if the weather permits.

Conditions can range from calm to rough with colorful marine life and clear warm cobalt blue water always on tap. Strong winds and strong currents play a large part on the success of each relay and the duration of their swim.

The six-person relay race, started as a competition in 1972 between the Waikiki Swim Club and the Olympic Club of San Francisco, has now grown to over 60 teams of six and dozens of solo swimmers from numerous states, Australia, Japan and Taiwan. "The only masters inter-island relay race in the world."

6. La Jolla Rough Water Swim

The multi-race event offers a 3-mile feature race in La Jolla, California, just north of San Diego, California.

Known as the Gatorman, the start and finish is located at the picturesque La Jolla Cove, a natural amphitheater for ocean swims in September. The other races for swimmers of all ages and abilities include a 250-yard, 1 mile and 3 mile-swim. Known as America's Premier Rough Water Swim, the event began in 1916 when 7 men swam 1.7 miles in the beautiful La Jolla Cove. By 1925, 8 men and 11 women swam the race. By 1950, 105 swimmers entered. In 1984, over 1,000 swimmers entered. In 1998, 2,255 swimmers participated, but in 1999, a cap of 2,000 was placed on the number of swimmers in order to maintain the high standards of the organizing committee.

America's Most Competitive Open Water Races

Besides the usual bevy of strong age-group and masters swimmers, there are always former Olympic and NCAA champions in the mix, often swimming among marine life and between kelp. With a water clarity is among the best along the West Coast, the water temperature is in the 60°'s F.

7. Great Chesapeake Bay Swim

The always fast and competitive race is the staple in the Mid-Atlantic. Held in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, it is a 4.4-mile point-to-point race in June.

In 1982, a 21-year-old local swimmer was the first to cross the Chesapeake Bay in memory of his father. In 1983, two swimmers entered the first official race and 60 swimmers participated in the second year. The swim grew to 870 entrants by 1990, with finishers ranging from 12 to 76 years old. In order to maintain high safety standards, the organizing committee now limits the race to 600 swimmers. It takes less than 18 minutes for the entire field of 600 swimmers to be filled up using the current online entry system.

Strong currents can meet a slew of very competitive age-group, collegiate and masters swimmers.

8. Nike Swim Miami

The race is an increasingly popular and very competitive multi-sport competition in the sheltered waters of Miami's Marine Stadium in Florida.

Held in April, the rectangular course offers races at distances of 1 mile, 5K and 10K. While swimmers enjoy the beautiful Miami downtown skyline in warm waters, they also have to compete against several Olympians, Olympic medalists and professional marathon swimmers who take part in an enjoyable event for swimmers of all ages and abilities.

9. Big Shoulders 5K Swim

Lake Michigan along the shores of Chicago, Illinois is drawing increasingly competitive among age-group, collegiate and masters swimmers to its annual race. The triangular course starts and finishes at the Ohio Street Beach and offers both a 2.5K and 5K distance in September.

Each loop is 2.5K where the swimmers can face chilly and windy conditions with a water temperature that can vary between 65°F and 75°F as they view the impressive Chicago skyline.

A separate wetsuit division is held. The race was founded by Olympic gold medalist, Bill Mulliken.

10. Manhattan Island Marathon Swim

Run by NYC Swim, the globally-renowned race is a 28.5-mile circumnavigation in the waters around Manhattan Island in New York City.

The course is a complete counter-clockwise circumnavigation of Manhattan Island, starting and finishing near Wall Street in June or July. It is a competitive race because it is difficult to be accepted with a well-defined application process and it is limited to 25 solo swimmers and 18 relay teams. In recent years, the

America's Most Competitive Open Water Races

field sells out in less than 45 minutes from the time the online application is open online.

The first race first held in 1927, but it has really picked up in prestige and competitiveness under the management of the NYC Swim. There is substantial surface chop and a strong tidal pull throughout much of the race with the water temperature between 62-67°F (16-19°C). The salt water around Manhattan Island may also present jetsam and flotsam. It is the premier event on the NYC Swim calendar that conducts other open water swims like the 1.3-mile Lady Liberty Swim, the 1-mile Park to Park Swim, the 2-mile Governors Island Swim, the 1K Brooklyn Bridge Swim, the 5.85-mile Little Red Lighthouse Swim and 17.5-mile Ederle Swim in addition to the new 10K NYC Pro Swim.

Other Competitive Races

But competition is heating up wherever you go from shore-to-shore:

- **24-mile Tampa Bay Marathon Swim** in Tampa Bay, Florida
- **2.4-mile Alcatraz Challenge** in San Francisco Bay
- **American Swimming Association** events in Lake Travis in Austin, Texas, including the **American Swimming Association Open Water Collegiate National Championships**
- **North Shore Surf 'n Sea Swim Series** along the famous north shore of Oahu, Hawaii
- **12.5-mile Swim Around Key West** in Florida
- **Bridge-to-Bridge 10K Swim** in San Francisco
- **Open Water Festival** in Fort Myers Beach, Florida
- **Lake Berryessa Open Water Swim** in Lake Berryessa, California
- **Glen S. Hummer Huntington Mile** in Lake Clare, Huntington, Indiana
- **Jack King 1-mile Ocean Swim** in Virginia Beach, Virginia
- **Chris Greene Lake 2-mile Cable Swim** in Charlottesville, Virginia
- **Dwight Crum Pier-to-Pier Swim** in Manhattan Beach, California
- **8.2-mile Pennock Island Challenge** in Ketchikan, Alaska
- **Boston Light 8-mile Swim** in Boston, Massachusetts
- **25K St. Vincent's Medical Center's SWIM Across the Sound** in Connecticut
- **7K Hawaiian Christmas Looong Distance Swim** on the south shore of Oahu in Honolulu, Hawaii
- **Columbus Swims** in Ohio
- **Fort Lauderdale Rough Water Swim** in Florida

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims



1. Sun Moon Lake International Swimming Carnival

- Location: Sun Moon Lake (*Jih Yueh Tan* in Taiwanese) in central Taiwan.
- Course: A mass participation cross-lake swim with up to 22,000 participants.
- Distance: 3.3K
- Date: August
- Description: The world's largest mass participation open water swimming event has different start groups for individuals of all ages and abilities.
- Additional Information: The attracts between 18,500 and 22,000 (maximum limit) swimmers to a beautifully tranquil lake at 760 meters (2,493 feet) in altitude, including an increasing number of foreign athletes.
- www.puliswim.org.tw/html

2. Midmar Mile

- Location: Midmar Damin Kwazulu Natal in South Africa (one-hour drive from Durban).
- Course: Straight point-to-point race across Midmar Dam.
- Distance: 1 mile
- Date: Second Sunday weekend in February
- Description: The world's largest competitive open water swimming event also has an associated a series of qualification swims throughout South Africa.
- Additional Information: Attracts swimmers of all ages and abilities, ranging from Olympic medalists to swimmers between the ages of 5 and 83. The event has recently attracted more than 17,000 entrants, a huge increase from the inaugural event in 1974 when 153 swimmers raced across the dam for the first time. Due to the large number of entrants, the swimmers are separated into 8 different races; each race is divided into 5

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

batches separated by 3-minute intervals; each batch wears a different colored cap to distinguish their batch. A chip timing system was introduced in 2008 to record accurate times for each participant.

- www.midmarmile.co.za

3. Vansbrosimningen

- Location: Vansbro in central Sweden
- Course: River swim under the six bridges of Vansbro.
- Distance: 3K
- Date: July
- Description: Over 4,000 swimmers participate in the largest open water swim in northern Europe Vansbrosimningen with another 2,250 women participating in the 1K Tjeisimmet (race for women only).
- Additional Information: Envisioned in 1950 with 10 swimmers in the first attempt, Vansbrosimningen became a national race in 1956 and has been growing ever since, especially when the “En Svensk Klassiker” was added in 1972. Over the past 53 years, one woman, Margareta Rylander, was the fastest overall finisher.
- www.vansbrosimningen.se/

4. Sea of Galilee Swim

- Location: Sea of Galilee in Israel.
- Course: A challenging and extremely popular channel swim with over 750 support boats
- Distance: 4K
- Date: October
- Description: A mass participation event, the largest in the Middle East that can get rough if winds come up.
- Additional Information: Attracts over 6,000 swimmers of all ages and abilities, an incredible 0.1% of the entire population in Israel. The swim was first held in 1944, two years before Israel was formed, and has continued nearly uninterrupted ever since.

5. British Gas Great North Swim

- Location: picturesque Lake Windermere, the largest lake in England, in the Lake District.
- Course: a 1-mile in-and-out-and-in course in a flat, scenic, but cold, lake.
- Distance: 1 mile
- Date: September
- Description: A very competitive race with several Olympic swimmers as well as the largest mass participation open water swim in Great Britain. Separate start for elite swimmers. Race requires swimmers to exit the water at the halfway mark for a run over timing mats in order to entertain the television audience.
- Additional Information: A 2-day open water swimming extravaganza that will draw up to 5,000 in its second year. Wetsuits are acceptable. Part of the British Gas Great Swim Series that includes the British Gas East Swim, the British Gas Great London Swim and the British Gas Great Scottish Swim.
- www.greatswim.org

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

6. Bosphorus Cross-Continental Swim 2010 (Boğaziçi Kıtalararası Yarışları)

- Location: Istanbul Strait that connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara in Turkey.
- Course: From Meis to Kas in a narrow channel.
- Distance: 6.5K
- Date: July
- Description: Organized by the National Olympic Committee of Turkey and started in 1989 with 68 swimmers, the Bosphorus has recently grown to 4,892 swimmers from dozens of countries – see photo on page 1
- Additional Information: Bosphorus is the world's most narrow strait used for international navigation and enables participants to claim they swam between Asia and Europe.
- www.bosphorus.cc/en/

7. Lorne Pier-to-Pub Swim

- Location: Lorne, Australia.
- Course: Fast pier-to-beach swim.
- Distance: 1.2K
- Date: January
- Description: Mixed field of swimmers with an average time of 22 minutes.
- Additional Information: Started as a challenge between lifeguards in 1981 when 100 people entered the first race. The race is now capped at 4,300 participants and is known as a very successful charity event.
- www.lornesurfclub.com.au

8. Rottnest Channel Swim

- Location: From Cottesloe Beach to Rottnest Island, near Perth, in Western Australia.
- Course: A challenging and extremely popular channel swim with over 750 support boats.
- Distance: 19.2K
- Date: February
- Description: Strong currents, abundant marine life, water temperature averages 21-22°C (69.8-71.6°F)
- Additional Information: Attracts swimmers between the ages of 14 to 72. The Rottnest Channel Swim informally began in 1987 when four men in their forties, sustained by water and bread, swam the channel. The following year, 12 people made the swim. By 2006, an online entry process was introduced where the number of entries for 2- and 4-person teams and solo swimmers was open for 7 days, attracting 3,910 entries. An electronic random ballot was then conducted to determine which 2,300 swimmers would participate. Solo swimmers receive an automatic entry; solo entries close on November 30th. Entries open the first working day in November and are only open for 7 days.
- www.rottnestchannelswim.com.au

9. Cole Classic

- Location: Manly Beach in Australia.
- Course: Ocean course
- Distance: 1K Novice Challenge and 2K

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Date: January
- Description: Started in 1983 with 101 swimmers with the Waikiki Roughwater Swim as an initial inspiration, the Cole Classic has grown to nearly 3,000 swimmers.
- Additional Information: Also an online fundraising opportunity through *EveryDay Hero*.
- www.coleclassic.com

10. La Jolla Rough Water Swim

- Location: La Jolla Cove in La Jolla, California, U.S.A., just north of San Diego.
- Course: Beach start and finish in and around the cold-water La Jolla Cove, which is a natural amphitheater for ocean swims.
- Distance: 250 yards, 1 mile and the 3-mile Gatorman Swim
- Date: September
- Description: Multi-distance event where many of the most accomplished open water swimmers from across the western American states compete. Marine life and kelp are abundant. Water clarity is among the best along the West Coast. Water temperature can be in the low 60°F's.
- Additional Information: Started in 1916, it is billed as America's *Premier Rough Water Swim* and nicknamed *The Big Wet One*. Event started in 1916 when 7 men swam 1.7 miles in the beautiful La Jolla Cove. By 1925, 8 men and 11 women swam the race. By 1950, 105 swimmers entered. In 1984, over 1,000 swimmers entered. In 2008, 2,297 swimmers participated, but since 1999, a limit was placed on the number of swimmers in order to maintain the high standards of the organizing committee.
- www.ljrws.com

11. Descenso a Nado de la Ria de Navia (Navia's Downstream Swim)

- Location: River Navia in Spain.
- Course: Swim downstream in a picturesque river.
- Distance: 1.1K (under 12 years old), 1.7K (13-15 years old), 3Ks (women) and 5K (men)
- Date: August
- Description: Started in 1958 when 14 swimmers swam 1 kilometer in a coastal village in Asturias, Galicia in northern Spain.
- Additional Information: Also serves as an official leg of the LEN Open Water Swimming Cup that attracts the top swimmers throughout Europe.
- www.rianavia.com

12. Rei do Mar Desafio (King of the Sea Challenge)

- Location: Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- Course: rectangular loop course in one of the world's most famous beaches
- Distance: 2K for amateurs, 10K for professionals
- Date: December
- Description: Same loop course that will be used for the 2016 Rio Olympics with gigantic turn buoy and a festive start and finish area.
- www.reierainhadomar.com.br/

13. Xstrata Nickel Swim Thru Perth

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Location: Perth, Australia.
- Course: Picturesque Swam River, finishing in Matilda Bay.
- Distance: 2.2 kilometers and 4K kilometers.
- Date: January.
- Description: A great community event that attracts a wide mix of swimmers of all abilities and ages ranging from 10 to 83 years old.
- Additional Information: Oldest open water swimming race in Australia with over a 90-year history that serves as a fund-raiser to the Paraplegic-Quadriplegic Association of Western Australia.
- www.claremontmasters.org/category/swim-thru-perth

14. Bonaire EcoSwim

- Location: Dutch Caribbean Island of Bonaire in the Netherland Antilles, 50 miles north of Venezuela, 30 miles from Curacao and 86 miles east of Aruba, outside of the hurricane belt.
- Course: start and finish at Captain Don's Habitat dock, along the coast of Bonaire. Water stops are available for the 5K and 10K races.
- Distance: Kid's pier-to-pier swim, 1K (with and without fins), 2K x 2-person relay, 3K (with and without fins), 5K and 10K swims.
- Date: December
- Description: Swim over pristine coral reefs amid beautiful marine life in crystal-clear warm waters.
- Additional Information: Scuba Diving Magazine (January 2008 issue) rated Bonaire #1 as the world's Top Dive Destination and Top Marine Life.
- www.aquamoonadventures.com

15. Manhattan Island Marathon Swim

- Location: New York City, U.S.A.
- Course: Complete counter-clockwise circumnavigation of Manhattan Island, starting and finishing near Wall Street in view of the Statue of Liberty.
- Distance: 28.5 miles
- Date: June
- Description: Field is limited to 25 solo swimmers and 18 relay teams that start and finish at Battery Park City. Fields sells out in less than 45 minutes. Race first held in 1927. Substantial surface chop and strong tidal pull are possible. Water temperature varies between 17 – 19°C (64 – 67°F). Course may also include random jetsam and flotsam. A Qualifying Swim must be completed before application will be accepted.
- Additional Information: This is the premier event of the NYC Swim that also conducts 8 other open water events and has attracted nearly 10,000 participants in more than 110 events, including the 1.3-mile Lady Liberty Swim in May, the 1-mile Park to Park Swim in June, the 2-mile Governors Island Swim in June that always sells out, the 1.5-kilometer Riverside Park Tune Up Swim in July, the 1-kilometer Brooklyn Bridge Swim in September that always sells out, 5.85-mile Little Red Lighthouse Swim in September, and the 17.5-mile Ederle Swim in October that always sells out, the professional 10K NYC Pro Swim.
- www.nycswim.org

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

16. Bermuda Round the Sound Swim

- Location: Harrington Sound in Bermuda, 650 miles east of North Carolina.
- Course: Finish at Palmetto Gardens in Palmetto Bay.
- Distance: 0.8K, 2K, 4K, 7.5K and 10K races
- Date: October
- Description: Swim over pristine coral reefs amid beautiful marine life in crystal-clear warm waters.
- Additional Information: Nearly 200 swimmers from 19 U.S. states and several countries swim along astoundingly beautiful coastline. Flights are less than 2 hours from New York. Event includes fun pre-race swims.
- www.aquamoonadventures.com

17. Þingvallasund Swim

- Location: Lake National Park in Iceland.
- Course: Lake Þingvellir, the largest natural lake in Iceland.
- Distance: 5K
- Date: July (midnight starting time)
- Description: Despite the 11°C water temperature, wetsuits are not allowed.
- www.thingvallasund.com/

18. English Channel

- Location: channel between England and France with the narrowest point being in the Strait of Dover between Dover, England and Calais, France.
- Course: a relatively narrow international channel with strong, but manageable, currents.
- Distance: 34K (21 miles).
- Date: Solo and relay swims generally attempted between June and October.
- Description: the world's most famous channel crossing for swimmers with nearly 1,000 successful swimmers to date.
- Additional Information: Considered to be the standard for channel crossing with the rules and traditions with significantly influence in the global open water swimming community. Most famous channel swim crossing in the world with two recognized governing bodies, Channel Swimming & Piloting Federation and the Channel Swimming Association.
- www.channelswimming.net and www.channelswimmingassociation.com

19. Tsugaru Channel

- Location: Deep-water channel between Honshu, the main island of Japan where Tokyo is located, and Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan.
- Course: A narrow international channel that connects the Sea of Japan with the Pacific Ocean.
- Distance: 19.5K between Tappi Misaki in Honshu and Shirakami Misaki in Hokkaido.
- Date: Solo and relay swims generally attempted during July or August.
- Description: Swimmers are carried long distances due to the extraordinarily strong currents flowing from the Sea of Japan to the Pacific Ocean. Swimmers face large blooms of squid during the night.

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Additional Information: Deep-water channel with patches of cold water where many oil tankers from the Middle East travel through to the West Coast of the U.S. The Seikan Tunnel was built below the channel where bullet trains from Tokyo travel to Hokkaido. First crossed in 1990.
- www.tsugaruchannelswimming.com

20. Beach-to-Beach Power Swim

- Location: Maho/Cinnamon/Trunk/Hawksnest on St. John in U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Course: 3 separate courses starting from the same beach: 1-mile swim to Cinnamon Bay, 2.25-mile swim to Trunk Bay or 3.5-mile swim to Hawksnest Bay.
- Distance: 1 mile, 2¼ miles and 3½ mile
- Date: May
- Description: Swimmers compete as an individual or as part of a 3-person team. Some swimmers also compete in the "assisted" category using snorkel and/or fins.
- Additional Information: Hosted by Friends of Virgin Islands National Park.
- www.friendsvinp.org/swim

21. St. Croix Coral Reef Swim

- Location: St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.
- Course: From Buck Island, an underwater coral reef park, to The Buccaneer, a luxury destination resort on St. Croix's east end.
- Distance: 2 mile and 5 miles
- Date: October
- Description: Spectacular blue water is home to the largest island barrier coral reef in the Caribbean, endangered fish species, starfish and many green and hawksbill sea turtles.
- Additional Information: Described by many participants as a fantastic swim with the most pristine water they have ever seen. Proceeds are donated to The Nature Conservancy.
- www.swimrace.com

22. Maratona Aquática Internacional de Santos (International Aquatic Marathon of Saints)

- Location: Santos, Brazil.
- Course: Ocean course with occasionally rough water off Boqueiro Beach of Santos.
- Distance: 1K, 2K, 4K, 10K
- Date: January.
- Description: Very competitive professional marathon swim that attracts top swimmers from around the world to the FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup race which is preceded by popular 1K, 2K and 4K races.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$20,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup circuit. 84 swimmers from 15 countries took part in 2008.
- www.maratonaaquatica.com.br

23. FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup in Cancun

- Location: Cancun Bay, Mexico.

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Course: Tropical ocean course with occasionally rough water.
- Distance: 10K
- Date: September
- Description: Start near the Oasis Viva Beach Cancun with four 2.5-kilometer loops. A very competitive marathon swim that attracts top swimmers from around the world.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$20,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA pro tour. Only swimmers from recognized National Federations affiliated with FINA are eligible to participate. Entry forms must be signed by appropriate National Federation executive.
- www.fina.org

24. Round Christiansborg Swim

- Location: Copenhagen, Denmark
- Course: Five 2-kilometer loops in Fredericksholm's Canal around the island that houses the palace of the Danish Parliament.
- Distance: 10K
- Date: August
- Description: Popular Danish swim for amateurs.
- Additional Information: Swimmers will swim through canals alongside Holmen Church, the Danish Parliament, the Danish Ministry of Culture, royal riding stables and near the central shopping area of Copenhagen. Amateurs swim in the morning and the pro swimmers start the FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup race in the afternoon. Water temperature is between 64 – 72°F (18 – 22°C).
- www.svoem.dk/t2w_1412.asp

25. Maratón Acuático Rio Coronda

- Location: Santa Fe, Argentina.
- Course: Swim down the River Coronda with many currents and eddies.
- Distance: 57K
- Date: February
- Description: A very competitive and tactical race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$11,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit.
- www.santafecoronda.com.ar

26. Maratón Acuático Internacional Ciudad de Rosario

- Location: Rosario, Argentina.
- Course: Six 1.7K loops of a triangular course located in front of Rambla Catalunya Beach in Rosario after starting 2 kilometers downstream.
- Distance: 15K
- Date: February
- Description: A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Additional Information: Offers US\$10,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit.
- www.fina.org

27. Maratón Patagones Viedma

- Location: Viedma, Argentina.
- Course: Swim in the Rio Negro.
- Distance: 15K
- Date: February
- Description: A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$11,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit.
- www.lapatagones-viedma.com.ar

28. Sumidero Canyon Swimming Marathon

- Location: Within the Sumidero Canyon, Chiapas, Mexico.
- Course: A point-to-point course along a meandering warm-water (26°C or 78.8°F river within an incredibly scenic canyon, with towering cliff walls, in southern Mexico.
- Distance: 15K
- Date: April
- Description: A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$20,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit.
- www.fina.org

29. Maratona del Golfo Capri-Napoli

- Location: Island of Capri to Napoli, Italy.
- Course: From Marina Grande Beach on the island of Capri to the seafront of via Caraccioli in Naples, Italy.
- Distance: 36K (22 miles)
- Date: July
- Description: Warm-water (28°C or 82°F) ocean course with occasional large swells and heavy surface chop. A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$20,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit. One of the world's most competitive professional marathon swims with a long, proud and colorful history since 1954.
- www.caprinapoli.com

30. Setúbal Bay International Swim Marathon

- Location: Setúbal Bay, Portugal.

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Course: Four loops of a 2.5-kilometer triangle course where warmth and sunshine are expected along the Portuguese coast in beautiful Setúbal Bay, located 40 kilometers south from Lisbon.
- Distance: 10K
- Date: June
- Description: Setúbal bay is one of the most beautiful bays in the world with Serra da Arrábida on one side and Rio Sado magic waterfront on the other. The water temperature is between 18 – 19°C with a water depth of between 3 – 25 meters.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$20,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup tour. A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.
- www.mun-setubal.pt/setubalbay

31. Ohrid Lake Swimming Marathon

- Location: Ohrid Lake, Macedonia.
- Course: Lake course that starts from the monastery St. Naum, goes along the lakeshore and finishes at the town harbor.
- Distance: 30K
- Date: August
- Description: A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world. Offers US\$10,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit.
- Additional Information: The first mass swimming competition in Lake Ohrid took place in 1924. The first marathon swim was held in 1954 along a 2.5K course "Gorica-Ohrid". The first ultra-marathon (36K) was held in 1962. Side-appreciated marathons such as the Capri Marathon in Naples, Italy.
- www.ohrid.org.mk/eng/maraton/maraton.htm

32. Jarak-Sabac Swim Marathon (Plivački maraton Jarak-Šabac)

- Location: In the Sava River near Sabac, Serbia.
- Course: A multi-race event starting from Gomolava on the Sava River.
- Distance: 2K, 4.5K and 18.7K
- Date: July
- Description: A very competitive race with the world's top professional marathon swimmers competing with amateurs competing in the shorter events. Even has nearly 40 years of history.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$20,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit as well as 50-meter races for young children.

33. Faros Marathon Swim

- Location: In Stari Grad Bay (Hvar Island) in Croatia.
- Course: Scenic venue and surrounding area.
- Distance: 16K
- Date: August

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Description: Generous hospitality and enthusiastic support of swimmers from the local community.
- Additional Information: Serves as the Croatian International Long Distance Swimming Championships. Started in 1976 by Vicko Soljan, the race has been hosted to about 1,000 swimmers of its 32-year history.

34. Willebroek Open Belgian Championships

- Location: Willebroek, Belgium
- Distance: 5K and 10K
- Date: August
- Additional Information: Serves as the Belgian National Championships.
- www.belswim.be/fr

35. Traversée Internationale du lac St-Jean

- Location: Lac St-Jean, Roberval, Quebec, Canada.
- Course: A crossing of a cold-water lake from Peribonka to Roberval, Quebec.
- Distance: 10K and 32K
- Date: July
- Description: One of the world's most prestigious professional races with a long and rich history. Thousands line the banks to greet the swimmers at the finish. Water temperature and winds can vary, but water temperature under 20°C (68°F) is expected. Offers US\$40,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit that always attracts the world's best professional marathon swimmers.
- Additional Information: The FINA 10KM Open Water Swimming World Cup is also held. Elite professional marathon swimmers also compete in eight 1.25K loops in Lac St Jean for US\$20,000 in prize money. Amateur events are also held.
- www.traversee.qc.ca

36. Traversée Internationale du lac Memphrémagog

- Location: Lac Memphrémagog, Quebec, Canada.
- Course: A long-loop course starting and finishing in Magog, Quebec, Canada in the narrow Lac Memphrémagog.
- Distance: 34K
- Date: July
- Description: Water temperature and winds can vary widely, especially with strong winds, but 20°C (68°F) is average. A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$25,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit.
- www.traversee-memphremagog.com

37. FINA 10KM Open Water Swimming World Cup in China

- Location: Shantou, China.
- Course: Loop course in the Xinjin River with water temperature around 23°C (73°F).
- Distance: 10K

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Date: September
- Description: A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$20,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit.
- www.fina.org

38. FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup in Hong Kong

- Location: Repulse Bay, Hong Kong.
- Course: 3 loops in a generally calm bay with mild currents and expected water temperature between 25 – 27°C (77 – 81°F).
- Distance: 10K
- Date: October
- Description: A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$20,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup circuit.
- www.fina.org

39. FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup in Sharjah

- Location: Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.
- Distance: 10K
- Date: October
- Description: Minimal currents and generally flat water. A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$20,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup circuit.
- www.fina.org

40. FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup in Dubai

- Location: Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
- Course: Two 5K loops in a river course inside an urban park.
- Distance: 10K
- Date: October
- Description: Minimal currents and generally flat water. A very competitive race with elite professional marathon swimmers from around the world.
- Additional Information: Offers US\$20,000 in prize money as part of the global FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup circuit.
- www.fina.org

41. Clean Half Marathon Swimming Open Water Relay

- Location: Hong Kong Bay, Hong Kong.
- Course: From Stanley to Deepwater Bay around the beautiful waters of Hong Kong's south side.
- Distance: 14.5K (9 miles).

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Date: October
- Description: Solo and 5-person relay race in blue, clean 22 – 27°C (71 – 81°F) waters in the back half of Hong Kong Island. Swells can get large with heavy surface chop depending on the wind.
- Additional Information: Large swells and heavy surface chop can be experienced at times, especially from backwash from rock cliffs. The world's first and only "carbon-neutral" option is available where the swimmers can choose to compete with an outrigger canoe instead of a traditional motorized escort boat. Relay swimmers rotate every 20 minutes.
- www.thecleanhalf.com

42. Sheko Challenge

- Location: Hong Kong Bay, Hong Kong.
- Course: Point-to-point course from Shek-O Big Wave Bay to Back Beach (Rocky Bay).
- Distance: 2.2K
- Date: July
- Description: Festive ocean race for all ages and abilities.
- Additional Information: Relatively calm waters.
- <http://d2adrenaline.com/sheko>

43. Fiji Swims

- Location: Treasure Island and Beachcomber Island, Fiji.
- Course: Held in a tropical island paradise, swimmers swim in crystal-clear waters over beautiful coral reefs and abundant marine life.
- Distance: 1K and 2.7K races and 18K solo or "free-style" relay swim.
- Date: July
- Description: The 1K race is from a floating pontoon near Treasure Island to Beachcomber Island. The 2.7K swim is at Beachcomber Island and starts on a sandbar. The 18K relay is from Sofitel Fiji Resort & Spa to Beachcomber Island. The 18K race can be done solo, with 2 swimmers or with 5 swimmers.
- Additional Information: Considered to be one of the most beautiful open water swims in the world with numerous world-renowned Olympic medalists annually participating, such as Natalie Coughlin, Shane Gould, Debbie Meyer (1968 triple gold medalist), Danyon Loader (double gold medalist from New Zealand).
- www.fijiswims.com

44. Galata-Varna Swimming Marathon

- Location: Varna on the west coast of the Black Sea in Bulgaria.
- Course: Loop course with start and finish at Varna's main beach.
- Distance: 4.4K and 10K
- Date: August
- Description: Warm-water 23°C (74°F) course with the start and finish with occasional large swells and heavy surface chop.
- Additional Information: Considered to be the 'Sea Capital of Bulgaria' where the 4.4K event has been held for nearly 70 years. The 10K event is part of the FINA 10KM

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

Marathon Swimming World Cup circuit where professional swimmers from around the world compete for US\$20,000 in prize money.

- www.travel-bulgaria.com/content/varna.shtml

45. Cook Strait

- Location: Channel between the North and South Islands of New Zealand.
- Course: Large tidal flows, cold water temperatures (14° - 19°C or 57° - 66°F) and jellyfish present significant challenges.
- Distance: 26K (16 miles)
- Date: July
- Description: Both sides of the strait have rock cliffs. To date, only 71 successful crossings have been made by 61 individuals from 8 countries. Hypothermia and change in weather conditions are the most common reasons attempts fail.
- Additional Information: 1 in 6 swimmers encounter sharks on their crossings, although no one has been attacked during a swim.
- www.cookstraitswim.org.nz

46. Maratón Internacional Hernandarias – Parana

- Location: From the city Hernandarias to Parana, Argentina.
- Course: Longest professional marathon swim under extremely competitive conditions down a river with varying currents and flotsam.
- Distance: 88K (54.6 miles)
- Date: July
- Description: Warm-water (28°C or 82°F) ocean course with occasional large swells and heavy surface chop.
- Additional Information: Tens of thousands of spectators line the course in an extremely festive atmosphere. Offers US\$25,000 in prize money when it is part of the global FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix circuit.
- www.hernandarias.gov.ar/maraton.htm

47. Irish (North) Channel

- Location: Cold-water channel between Ireland and Scotland.
- Course: From the island of Capri (Lido Le Ondine) to the city of Naples.
- Distance: 33.7K (21 miles)
- Date: Window of opportunity is July through September
- Description: Heavy seas, cold water, thunderstorms and strong currents must be overcome to be successful. Considered by many to be the most difficult channel swim in the world with the water temperature around 28°C (54°F) on normally overcast days.
- Additional Information: To date, only 16 successful crossings have been made, including 11 solo swims by 7 swimmers and 5 relays. Most of the 70+ attempts have been abandoned due to difficult conditions and hypothermia. Swim crossings are governed by the rules set by the Irish Long Distance Swimming Association. First attempt was made in 1924 and the first success was 1947. There is difficulty in predicting weather and water conditions; swimmers face large pods of jellyfish if conditions are calm.

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Additional Information: Swim crossings are governed by the rules set by the Irish Long Distance Swimming Association. First attempt was made in 1924 and the first success was 1947.
- www.bangorboat.com/page6.html

48. Ijsselmeerzwemmarathon

- Location: From Stavoren to Medemblik in Ijsselmeer in the Netherlands.
- Course: Formerly the ocean, but now a large lake, Ijsselmeer that can develop very difficult conditions with the winds.
- Distance: 22K (13.6 miles)
- Date: Usually the second Saturday in August
- Description: A competitive field.
- Additional Information: Now in its fourth decade, the event was recognized for merit by the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame in 2007. Individual escort boats are required and some prize money is offered that has served as the Dutch Marathon Swimming National Championship.
- www.zwemmarathon.nl

49. Fiji Ocean Swim Festival

- Location: Plantation Island, Mamanuca Islands, Fiji
- Course: 1.5K and 3K loop course off of Lomani and Plantation Beach. 10-kilometer course is around Plantation Island.
- Distance: 1.5K, 3K and 10K
- Date: October
- Description: The Mamanuca Group of islands provide ideal conditions for swimming with clear waters and beautiful reefs.
- Additional Information: Includes a 5-person relay over a 2-kilometer course. Attracts a growing number of swimmers from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Korea USA and Europe as well as swimmers from throughout the South Pacific.
- www.pacificswims.com

50. Vanuatu Ocean Swim

- Location: Port Vila in Vanuatu.
- Course: Diamond shaped course from Port Vila's seafront around Iririki Island and back.
- Distance: 1.5K and 3.2K
- Date: June
- Description: Port Vila is one of the most beautiful harbors in the world and swimmers pass over reefs and deep channels in clear waters around Iririki Island. Attracts over 200 swimmers from Australia, New Zealand, New Caledonia and Fiji. Features clinics with some of the world's top distance swimmers, artifact trophies for top 3 finishers in each age group.
- Additional Information: Pacific Swims also holds the Espiritu Santo Aore Swim on Luganville, Espiritu Santo right after the Vanuatu Ocean Swim. This 2.8K swim crosses the Segond Channel from Luganville to the Aore Resort. Espiritu Santo is Vanuatu's "Big Island" steeped in tradition and history. Luganville and the Segond Channel was an

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

important US WWII base for the push on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and at the eastern end of the channel is the wreck of the President Coolidge now one of the world's most famous dive sites.

- www.pacificswims.com

51. Molokai Channel

- Location: Channel between the islands of Molokai and Oahu in Hawaii.
- Course: Difficult deep-water channel in the middle of the Pacific Ocean where heavy seas, tropical heat and extremely strong currents can push swimmers off-course by miles.
- Distance: 42K (26 miles)
- Date: Anytime the winds are sufficiently calm
- Description: Beautiful channel between two tropical islands with abundant marine life.
- Additional Information: Known as the Kaiwi Channel, it has only been successfully crossed by 13 individuals.
- www.hawaiiswim.org/hawaiianChannel/kaiwiChannel.html

52. New Zealand Ocean Swim Series

- Location: Throughout New Zealand, from Wellington to North Shore City.
- Course: In stunning beaches and major waterways.
- Distance: 0.7K and 2.8K
- Date: Harbour Crossing in Auckland is in November, Capital Classic in Oriental Bay is in January; Corsair Classic is in February, Mt Maunganui is in March, King of the Bays is in April.
- Description: Five-part series includes Harbour Crossing, Capital Classic, Corsair Classic, Sand to Surf Mt. Maunganui and King of the Bays.
- Additional Information: Very well-marketed series has introduced and incorporated many event innovations including OceanKids and the Golden Goggles Club.
- www.oceanswim.co.nz

53. Strait of Gibraltar

- Location: Between Europe (Spain) and Africa (Morocco). Strait between Spain and Morocco that connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea.
- Course: Shortest point is between Punta Oliveros in Spain and Punta Ciros in Morocco.
- Distance: 14.4K (8 miles)
- Date: June to October
- Description: Swimmers must cross an eastern flow of water from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea with an average of 3 knots (5.5 km per hour). Heavy boat traffic, logistical barriers and surface chop confront swimmers throughout each attempt.
- Additional Information: First successful crossing in 1928. Its boundaries were known in antiquity as the Pillars of Hercules. The currents remain at Herculean strength. Combined with the unpredictability of the water conditions and high winds, only 185 successful one-way crossings and 7 double-crossings have been made to date. Most attempts are made from Tarifa Island due to the influence of strong currents, a distance of 18.5 – 22K (10-12 miles).
- www.acneg.com

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

54. Africa Ice Swim

- Location: New Dam, Fraserburg, South Africa.
- Course: at 1,400 meters (4593 feet) above sea level with -8°C to -16°C night air temperatures.
- Distance: 600 meters and one mile
- Date: July
- Description: An ice swim is a minimum of a mile (1.6K) swim in sub-5°C (41°F).
- Additional Information: Participation in both high-risk swims is by invitation only due to safety and medical arrangements. Races have a maximum of 30 swimmers.

55. Trinidad & Tobago Open Water Classic

- Location: Maracas Beach in Trinidad (northeast of Venezuela).
- Course: Out-and-back course in a stunningly beautiful stretch of beach in the southern Caribbean Sea.
- Distance: 5K
- Date: September
- Description: Formerly a 5-mile race, the Open Water Classic serves as the Amateur Swimming Association of Trinidad & Tobago national championships.
- Additional Information: Over a 50-year history, the Open Water Classic was once a 5-mile race, but is now a 5-kilometer race in order to conform with international open water swimming standards.

56. Flowers Sea Swim

- Location: In the pristine waters of Seven-Mile Beach on the Grand Cayman Islands in the Caribbean Sea.
- Course: Point-to-point, in-the-water finish in relatively shallow, but incredibly clear waters.
- Distance: 1 mile
- Date: June
- Description: Described as the world's flattest and fastest ocean mile.
- Additional Information: Over 600 swimmers participate in the race in addition to the 400+ individuals who participated in the Walk-and-Watch event along the tropical beach. Cayman Islands Amateur Swimming Association's Open Water Sea Swim annual series also includes the Zulu 2-mile sea swim in October, Cable & Wireless 800-meter Swim in April, Cayman Brac 800-meter Swim in April, Butterfield Bank 800-meter in May, CUC 800-meter in October, the Pirate's Week 5K in November and the Cayman Islands Amateur Swimming Association 10K in November.
- www.flowersseaswim.com

57. Sakurajima Kinko Bay Open Water Swimming Championship

- Location: In Kinko Bay in Kagoshima in southern Japan.
- Course: Point-to-point, cross-bay swim
- Distance: 4K
- Date: July
- Description: Hundreds of teams take part.

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Additional Information: 23 years of constant growth in the number of teams and participants.

58. Orinoco River Swim

- Location: Convergence of the Orinoco River and Caroni River in San Felix, Venezuela.
- Course: Fast-flowing river
- Distance: 3.1K (1.9 miles)
- Date: April
- Description: A very popular and competitive downstream river race.

59. Sandycove Island Challenge Race

- Location: Sandycove Island in Kinsale, County Cork, Ireland.
- Course: Counterclockwise circumnavigation around the island.
- Distance: 2K (1.25 miles), depending on how close one swims to the island.
- Date: September
- Description: The Old Head of Kinsale shelters Sandycove Island from the prevalent westerly winds. Swim at high tide for the easiest swim. Low tide exposes hidden reefs and a beach at the base of the slipway. Medium currents at mid-tide can present problems for slower swimmers.
- Additional Information: Training swims are made from late winter when water can be 45°F to late summer. Nearly 150 swims are scheduled each year at the primary training spot for open water swimmers and triathletes. Excellent training location for those preparing for an English Channel attempt. Clean crisp water with sunken reefs and waving sea plants clearly visible.
- www.corkmasters.ie/html/challenge.htm

60. Yonaguni Island

- Location: Most southwestern island of Japan in Okinawa near Taiwan.
- Course: Demanding swim in the East China Sea around an isolated, incredibly beautiful tropical island known as one of the top three hammerhead shark breeding grounds of the world.
- Distance: 29K (18 miles)
- Date: Attempts can be made in spring or fall
- Description: Population of island is under 1,700 people. Thousands of hammerhead sharks congregate near island within view of swimmers.
- Additional Information: Water temperature about 26.6°C (80°F) in spring and fall; much warmer in summer. First circumnavigation completed in 1993 in 7 hours and 8 minutes.

61. Island of Jersey

- Location: Island located in the English Channel approximately 14 miles (22K) from Normandy, France and approximately 100 miles (162K) south of Great Britain.
- Course: Scenic terrain ranging from long sandy bays to rugged cliffs.
- Distance: Approximately 70K (43.5 miles) of coastline
- Date: July or August

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Description: Jersey is the largest and southernmost of the Channel Islands. First circumnavigation swim successfully completed in 1969; fastest circumnavigation swim is held by Alison Streeter, the Queen of the Channel, in 9 hours and 53 minutes.
- Additional Information: Water temperature is 17.7°C (64°F) and the swim is tidal assisted if timed right.
- www.jerseyseaswims.org

62. Asian Beach Games

- Location: Sanur Beach in Bali, Indonesia.
- Course: Tough ocean loop course.
- Distance: 5K and 10K
- Date: October
- Description: Competitive races that includes many of the top marathon swimmers throughout Asia.
- Additional Information: Part of the Asian Beach Games that includes other sports such as beach soccer, beach sepak takraw, beach handball, bodybuilding, windsurfing, triathlon, dragon boat, sailing, paragliding, surfing, windsurfing, woodball and beach volleyball. Open water races are officiated by members of the FINA Technical Open Water Swimming Committee.
- <http://www.muscat2010.org/en/>

63. Cadiz Freedom Swim

- Location: Robben Island to Big Bay, Cape Town, South Africa
- Course: Across the cold-water Robben Island Channel (13°C or 55°F).
- Distance: 7.5K
- Date: April
- Description: There are two categories: solo swimmers that compete under standard rules and relays of 2 or 4 swimmers (no wetsuits, wetsuits, corporate relay, schools relay).
- The Cape Long Distance Swimming Association offers information on swimming various distances between 7-35 kilometers between Cape Town and Robben Island, False Bay, Cape Point and other locations with water temperatures range between 13°C (55°F) and 19°C (66°F).
- Additional Information: Robben Island is located 12 kilometers offshore from Cape Town, South Africa. Robben Island was used as a cruel prison for nearly 400 years, including the imprisonment of Nelson Mandela from 1964-1982. Today, the island is a World Heritage site and offers one of the world's great channel challenges. Since it was first crossed in 1899 by Henry Charteris Hooper, nearly 300 individuals have successfully swum between the mainland and Robben Island.
- www.freedomswim.co.za

64. Peter Pan Cup Christmas Morning Handicap Swim

- Location: Hyde Park in the heart of London in England.
- Course: Short, but shockingly cold, swim (4°C or 40°F) on the south bank of the lake.
- Distance: 100 yards
- Date: December 25

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Description: Christmas tradition since 1864.
- Additional Information: Site of the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim during the 2012 London Olympics. The Serpentine was man-made by joining a series of small ponds together back in 1730, under the direction of Queen Caroline. One of the first competitions in the Serpentine was in 1837 promoted by a London wine merchant by collecting an entrance fee from competitors. A gold medal and the title of 'Champion of the Serpentine River' were first awarded in a 1838 Grand Match. Twelve athletes, including the Champion of England and the Champion of London, competed in front of 20,000 spectators over a distance of 1000 yards in a Bridge-to-Bridge race.
- www.serpentineswimmingclub.com

65. Lange Afstandzwemwedstrijd Sluis

- Location: Canal Hoeke – Sluis with start and finish in Sluis in the Netherlands.
- Course: Back-and-forth swim in old shipping canal with the turn-around point in Brugge in Belgium.
- Distance: 2K, 5K and 2.5K (breaststroke)
- Date: Usually the first Sunday in July
- Description: Turning point is in Belgium making it truly an international swim.
- Additional Information: The event continues to be popular in its fourth decade.

66. Traversata dello Stretto

- Location: Strait of Messina in Sicily, Italy.
- Course: Various courses in the Strait of Messina which is a narrow channel between the eastern tip of Sicily and the southern tip of Calabria on the Italian mainland.
- Distance: Between 1.8K and 5.2K
- Date: August and September
- Description: The first race is the 5.2K 45th annual Traversata dello Stretto. First crossed in 1930, the Strait has strong currents and natural whirlpools that make for a challenging and enjoyable event to do and watch, especially on a clear day. The Traversata dello Stretto starts at Torre Faro, crosses the Strait of Messina to a turn in Cannitello in Calabria on the Italian mainland, then traverses along the Italian coast and finished in Villa San Giovanni. The second race is the Trofeo Baia di Grotta. The third race is the 1.8K II Trofeo Onda Azzurra along the Calabria coast. The fourth race is 36th annual 3.7K Favazzina-Scilla swim in late August. The fifth race is the 5.1K XI Memoria Nino Sofi. The sixth race is the 3K Città di Reggio Calabria II in September.
- Additional Information: In an earlier poll, the establishment of the Traversata dello Stretto race in September 1954, inspired by Giuseppe Dominici's 1930 crossing, was chosen as the Top Open Water Moment in History as it is typical of many local coastal swims in the Mediterranean.
- www.baiadigrotta.it

67. Lektocht

- Location: River Lek (local name of the Rhine) in the Netherlands.
- Course: Start at Beusichem and finish in Culemborg in a river, usually current-assisted.
- Distance: 2K, 6K and 2.5K (breaststroke)

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Date: The second Sunday in July
- Description: Winding course with bends in the river.
- Additional Information: Offers good prize money that attracts top Dutch swimmers and top competitive swimmers from other countries. Swim has a long history, but it was cancelled in the 1960's due to pollution in the river Rhine and restarted in the 1990's.
- www.zc90.nl/lektocht

68. Lange Afstand NW Overijssel

- Location: Steenwijkerdiep at Steenwijkerwold in the Netherlands.
- Course: Back-and-forth in a freshwater canal on boundary of National Park De Weerribben.
- Distance: 1K, 2.5K, 5K and 2K (breaststroke)
- Date: Usually last Saturday in June
- Description: Often the venue for the Dutch Open Water Swimming Championships.
- Additional Information: Popular, safe swim that has been continuing for over 30 years.

69. Ter rede van Hoorn

- Location: Fresh water Lake Ijsselmeer at Hoorn in the Netherlands.
- Course: Back-and-forth in a freshwater canal on boundary of National Park De Weerribben.
- Distance: 1K, 2K, 5K, 10K and 1K (breaststroke), 2K (breaststroke)
- Date: Usually last weekend in July or first weekend in August
- Description: 2-day event
- Additional Information: Occasionally rough water conditions.
- www.terredevanhoorn.nl

70. Zeezwemtocht Harlingen

- Location: Wadden Sea at Harlingen in the Netherlands.
- Course: Back-and-forth in a freshwater canal on boundary of National Park De Weerribben.
- Distance: 2K
- Date: Late August or early September, depending on the tides
- Description: Salt-water swim from inside the small sea harbor, around the pier, and back to the beach for a shore finish.
- Additional Information: Now in its fourth decade, this is a national federation-sanctioned swim that allows walking during the race.
- www.zwemverenigingdevikings.nl

71. Gozo-Malta Open Water Channel Race

- Location: From Ras il-Qala to Marfa in Malta.
- Course: In the Mediterranean Sea.
- Distance: 5.5K
- Date: August
- Description: All swimmers are accompanied by escort boats in the charity swim with ir-Razzett tal-Ħbiberija.

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Additional Information: Malta is a small nation of seven islands off the coast of Sicily in Italy and is site of a six-part open water swimming series organized by the Birkirkara St Joseph Sports Club. The series includes the 2K Bugibba Open Sea Swim in June, the 2K Sliema Open Sea Swim in June, the 2K Bugibba Open Sea Swim in July, the 2K Marsascala Open Sea Swim in July, the 4K St. Julian's Open Sea Swim in August and the 2K Birzebbuga Open Sea Swim in September, all starting in the evening.

72. Maratona Aquática

- Location: Wet'n Wild Park near São Paulo in Brazil.
- Course: Lake in the Wet'n Wild water park.
- Distance: 1K, 2K and 4K
- Date: August
- Description: Serves as the Maratona Aquática Championships
- Additional Information: Nearly 2,000 swimmers, ages 6-80, take part annually.
www.wetnwild.com.br/wet/maratonaaquatica.asp

73. The Bay Challenge

- Location: Sandy Cove (West Vancouver) to Kitsilano Beach in Vancouver, Canada.
- Course: Solo and relay races.
- Distance: 0.75K, 1.5K, 3K and 6K (solo + relay)
- Date: July
- Description: Wetsuits are mandatory and neoprene swim caps are strongly recommended.
- Additional Information: 78-year history of cold-water swimming. Ocean temperatures may range between 13°C (50°F) in the shipping lane to 18 – 20°C (62 – 66°F) at Kitsilano Beach.
- http://vowsa.bc.ca/bay_challenge_info

74. International Swimming Marathon of Toroneos Gulf

- Location: From Kallithea Beach to Nikiti in Greece.
- Course: Sea course.
- Distance: 26K
- Date: July
- Description: Water temperature in the deep-blue sea averages 24°-27C (75°-80.6°F)
- Additional Information: Inspired by a group of Nikita youngsters who dared to swim an unprecedented 25 kilometers tom Nikiti, Sithonia to Kallithea, Kassandra in 1971, the local community generously provides warm hospitality for the international field of 30 swimmers. Each swimmer is considered a winner and receives a cup and wreath crown made of olive tree leaves as was done in ancient Greece.
- www.sithon.org.gr

75. Lake Trichonida Crossing

- Location: Raches in central Greece.
- Course: Lake race.
- Distance: 3K and 16K
- Date: July

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Description: 3-kilometer race is for handicapped individuals in conducted in addition to the invitational 16-kilometer marathon swim.
- www.marathonswim.gr/agones_en.html

76. International Winter Swimming Marathon

- Location: Palirria, Thessaloniki in northern Greece.
- Course: Held on the Nei Epivates-Palirria Beach in winter.
- Distance: 1K
- Date: January
- Description: Cold-water sea with water temperature under 10°C (50°F)
- Additional Information: Swimmers must provide a medical certificate to participate due to the cold.
- www.marathonswim.gr/agones_en.html

77. International Swimming Marathon of Messiniakos Gulf

- Location: South Peloponnesus in Greece.
- Course: Invitational crossing of the Messiniakos Gulf from Koronis to Kalamata.
- Distance: 30K
- Date: September
- Description: Cold-water sea with water temperature under 10°C (xx°F)
- Additional Information: Interested athletes must provide a CV via email to klmnc@otenet.gr.
- www.nok.gr

78. Cadiz Freedom Swim

- Location: Table Bay off the coast of Cape Town, South Africa
- Course: From Robben Island (Dutch for “seal” island) to Big Bay in very cold waters.
- Distance: 7.5K
- Date: April
- Description: An extreme cold-water swim (below 13°C or 55°F) in a channel where there are marine life, fog and strong, unpredictable currents. Includes relay and wetsuit divisions.
- Additional Information: An important part of the swim involves highlighting Robben Island's historic role in South Africa's struggle for democracy. The island is a World Heritage Site and where Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners spent decades imprisoned during the apartheid era.
- www.cadiz.co.za/events/freedomswim/

79. Amber Mile Race

- Location: Yantarnoe Lake (Amber Lake) in Yantarnyy near the Baltic Sea in Kaliningrad, Russia
- Course: In a freshwater lake very near the Baltic Sea on a resort coast in a Russian enclave between Poland and Lithuania.
- Distance: 1 nautical mile
- Date: July

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Description: Established by the Russian Federation of Masters Swimming, the water is above 20°C (68°F).
- Additional Information: Called the Amber Mile Race because 80% of the world's amber is produced in Kaliningrad.
- www.swimmingmasters.ru

80. 2XU Ocean Swim Series

- Location: Five-race series and community swims throughout Tasmania in Australia.
- Course: Various ocean courses.
- Distance: 1.2K to 5K
- Date: December through March
- Description: Series includes the 1.2K Taste Festival – Pier River Swim in Carlton Park in December, 0.5K, 2K and 5K Penguin Island Open Water Swim in Port Sorell in January, 0.5K, 1K and 2K Australia Day Swim on Kingston Beach in January, 0.5K, 1K and 2K Clear Water Classic in Carlton Beach in February, and 0.5K and 2K River-to-Bluff Swim in Devonport in March.
- Additional Information: Organized by the Surf Life Saving of Tasmania, the series includes 0.5K races for novice and nippers. It also includes a mass participation Community Series including the 0.5K and 1K Early Season Spring Swim in Lauderdale in early November, the 0.5K and 1K Nearly Summer Swim in Lauderdale in late November, the 0.5K and 1K Twilight Swim in Lauderdale in mid-January, the 1.6K Fort Beach Swim in South Arm in early February, the 1K Twilight Swim in Kingston Beach in mid-March, and the 1K, 2K and 5K Devil of a Swim in Bicheno Waubs Bay in early April.
- www.surflifesavingtasmania.com

81. Western Australia Open Water Swim Series

- Location: Five-race series throughout Western Australia.
- Course: Various ocean courses.
- Distance: 1.25K to 10K
- Date: November through January
- Description: Open Water Series #1 includes 1.25-, 2.5-, 5- and 10K races in Champion Lakes in November, Open Water Series #2 includes 1.25-, 2.5- and 5K races in Rockingham Foreshore in November, Open Water Series #3 includes 1.25-, 2.5- and 5K races in Mullaloo Beach in December (with the Carolyn Bourke Memorial Fundraiser), Open Water Series #4 includes 1.25-, 2.5- and 5K races in Leighton Beach in January, Open Water Series #5 includes 1.25-, 2.5-, 5- and 10K races in Sorrento Beach in late January. Open Water Series #5 also serves as the Western Australia State Championships and the 10K Rottneest Channel Swim Rotto Rehearsal.
- www.wa.swimming.org.au

82. Ocean Racing Series World Championships

- Location: Nelson Mandela Bay in Port Elisabeth, South Africa.
- Course: Seaside course with an onshore start and finish.
- Distance: 2K

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Date: April
- Description: Part of the 3-day Nelson Mandela Bay Splash Festival that includes the professional 7K Nelson Mandela Bay Bell Buoy Challenge and the very exciting elimination event called the King of Nelson Mandela Bay and Queen of Nelson Mandela Bay, and the Izani Siqubhe 1K Ocean Swim 4°C.
- Additional Information: The multi-discipline Nelson Mandela Bay Splash Festival brings together world-class professional swimmers together with local swimmers of every age and ability.
- www.splashfestival.com, www.ors-worldchamps.co.za and www.kingofthebay.co.za

83. 10 van Tilburg

- Location: Wilhelminakanaal at Tilburg in the Netherlands.
- Course: Back-and-forth straightaway course in fresh water canal course.
- Distance: 1K, 3K, 10K and 2K breaststroke
- Date: August
- Description: Like other Dutch open water events, many age-group and masters categories are also offered.
- Additional Information: Also offers a swim-run event.
- www.trb-res.nl

84. Bloemendaal

- Location: Bloemendaal Beach in the Netherlands.
- Course: Tidal-assisted seaside course.
- Distance: 1 nautical mile
- Date: Second Sunday in August
- Description: 53rd annual swim is always popular.
- www.reddingsbrigade-bloemendaal.nl

85. Internationale Open Water Wedstrijden Willebroek

- Location: Bloso sportcentrum Hazewinkel in Willebroek in Belgium.
- Course: 2K freshwater rowing basin.
- Distance: 2K, 5K and 10K
- Date: August
- Description: 26th annual swim is always popular.
- Additional Information: Well-organized event that has served as the Belgium Marathon Swimming Championships.
- www.vwz.be

86. Damme-Brugge Open Water Swim

- Location: Canal Hoeke - Sluis in Belgium.
- Course: Straightline course in a freshwater canal from Damme to Brugge.
- Distance: 5K (freestyle) and 5K (breaststroke).
- Date: August
- Description: 87th annual swim is always popular.

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Additional Information: Utilizes a wave start that separates strokes and speed of swimmers, along includes a 4.5-kilometer swim for recreational participants.

87. International Self-Transcendence Marathon Swim

- Location: Lake Zurich, Switzerland.
- Course: Cross-lake swim from Rapperswil to Zurich, Switzerland.
- Distance: 26.4K
- Date: July
- Description: Solo and relay swims can experienced significant surface chop with strong winds.
- Additional Information: An international field usually quickly reaches its maximum number of swimmers.
- www.srichinmoyraces.org/ch/veranstaltungen/zhlake

88. Maraton Guadalupano

- Location: Acapulco, Mexico.
- Course: 2-day open water swimming event in a beautiful beach course in a Mexican resort town.
- Distance: 1K and 4.2K
- Date: December
- Description: 1K race is one first day from Isla Roqueta to Playa Caleta; 4.2K race is from Playa Caleta to Playa Hornitos.
- Additional Information: Celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2008.

89. Vibes & Scribes Lee Swim

- Location: Cork, Ireland.
- Course: Swim under 8 bridges through the center of Cork.
- Distance: 2K
- Date: July
- Description: 1.7K are downstream and 300 meters upstream.
- Additional Information: Over 300 swimmers participate in a swim that was originally held in 1914.
- www.corkmasters.ie/html/leeswim.htm

90. Liffey Swim

- Location: In the Liffey River through Dublin, Ireland.
- Course: Swim through the heard of Dublin.
- Distance: 2.2K
- Date: Last weekend in August or first weekend in September
- Description: Swimmers must qualify for the race by completing five open water swims that are used to calculate the swimmer's handicap time. Wetsuits are not allowed.
- Additional Information: Over 400 swimmers participate in a swim that was originally held in 1920.

91. RCP Tiburon Mile

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

- Location: San Francisco Bay, California, U.S.A.
- Course: Cold-water point-to-point swim from Angel Island to the shores of downtown Tiburon.
- Distance: 1.2 miles
- Date: September or October, depending on the tides
- Description: Considered to be the fastest and most competitive short-distance race in the world with several Olympic medalists, Olympians, national and world champions, English Channel swimmers and FINA World Cup and FINA Grand Prix winners from over 20 countries, including Russia, Australia, South Africa, Italy, Tunisia, Brazil, Mexico and Canada.
- Additional Information: Over 800 swimmers are also treated to the world's best open water swimming post-race banquet. Overall male and female winner receives a US\$10,000 first prize.
- www.rcptiburonmile.com

92. Waikiki Roughwater Swim

- Location: South shore of Oahu in Honolulu, Hawaii, U.S.A.
- Course: Start under the Diamond Head volcano and swim across Waikiki Bay over coral reefs to the finish at the Hilton Hawaiian Village.
- Distance: 2.4 miles
- Date: Labor Day, first Monday in September
- Description: Very competitive race where dozens of accomplished swimmers annually compete. Swimmers swim over beautiful coral beds and colorful marine life in a picturesque course.
- Additional Information: Inspiration for the 2.4-mile swim in the Ironman Triathlon. High surf and strong currents are occasionally encountered by participants of all ages and backgrounds from dozens of countries and every U.S. state. In 1970, the race saw 4 women and 32 men swim across Waikiki. Over 1,000 people annually enter the race.
- www.waikikiroughwaterswim.com

93. Trans Tahoe Relay

- Location: Lake Tahoe, bordering the states of Nevada and California in the western U.S.A.
- Course: From Sand Harbor Beach in Nevada to Skylandia Beach, Lake Forest, California at 6,200-foot altitude.
- Distance: 11.5 miles
- Date: July
- Description: 6-person relay that brings in many accomplished pool and open water swimmers including world open water swimming champions, FINA World Cup and FINA Grand Prix pro swimmers, and NCAA and Olympic Trial qualifiers and top masters swimmers from dozens of states and countries.
- Additional Information: It is a cold-water (12.7 – 15.5C° or 55 – 60°F), clear-water event that requires a high level of physical fitness. Now in its 32nd year, the popular and prestigious relay race is the only swim race that crosses two state lines. Wetsuits are not allowed.

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

94. Maui Channel Swim

- Location: In the Au'au Channel between the island of Lanai and the island of Maui in Hawaii, U.S.A.
- Course: Start at the north side of Lanai on an uninhabited stretch of beach and finish on the south side of Maui.
- Distance: 9.6 miles
- Date: Early September (Saturday before the American Labor Day)
- Description: Solo and relay swimmers cross a deep-water, beautiful channel as they gaze upon 5 islands (Lanai, Maui, Molokai, Oahu and Hawaii) if the weather permits. Generally calm conditions, colorful marine life and clear warm cobalt blue water makes this event the most popular relay swim in the world. Marine life, strong winds and strong currents on occasion.
- Additional Information: The six-person relay race, started as a competition in 1972 between the Waikiki Swim Club and the Olympic Club of San Francisco, has now grown to over 60 teams of six and dozens of solo swimmers from numerous states, Australia, Japan and Taiwan. Swimmers rotate every 30 minutes. Race is followed by the 1-mile Amakua Swim.
- www.mauichannelswim.com

97. Great Chesapeake Bay Swim

- Location: Maryland, U.S.A.
- Course: Point-to-point swim across Chesapeake Bay.
- Distance: 4.4 miles
- Date: June
- Description: brings in many top open water swimmers from the Midwest and East Coast. Strong currents on occasion; most popular swim on East Coast.
- Additional Information: In 1982, a 21-year-old local swimmer was the first to cross the Chesapeake Bay in memory of his father. In 1983, two swimmers entered the first official race and 60 swimmers participated in the second year. The swim grew to 870 entrants by 1990, with finishers ranging from 12 to 76 years old. In order to maintain high safety standards, the organizing committee now limits the race to 600 swimmers. It takes less than 18 minutes for the entire field of 600 swimmers to be filled up using the current online entry system.
- www.bayswim.com

98. Big Shoulders Swim

- Location: Chicago, Illinois, U.S.A.
- Course: Swim triangular course in Lake Michigan near downtown Chicago.
- Distance: 2.5K and 5K
- Date: Last weekend in August or first weekend in September
- Description: Swimmers must qualify for the race by completing five open water swims that are used to calculate the swimmer's handicap time. Wetsuits are not allowed.
- Additional Information: Over 800 swimmers including the top open water swimmers across the Midwest states.
- www.bigshoulders.org

World's Top 100 Open Water Swims

99. Acapulco 5K International Ronald Johnson Open Water Swim

- Location: Acapulco, Mexico
- Course: Along the waterfront in Acapulco, Mexico from one end of the bay to the other.
- Distance: 1K, 1.5K and 5K
- Date: January
- Description: Young swimmers use the shorter courses. The 5K race is separated into 4 heats in a well-marked course with a festive atmosphere and clinic at the end of the race that finishes at a water park that is open to all competitors.
- www.anv.com.mx/miniSitios/5k2010/english.html

100. Pennock Island Challenge

- Location: In Ketchikan, Alaska.
- Course: Around Pennock Island in the Tongass Narrows.
- Distance: 8.2 miles (13.2K)
- Date: August
- Description: A current-assisted course largely sheltered from large surf. Water temperature ranges from mid-50s°F to low 60s°F (12.7 to 16.6°C). Air temperatures range from the mid-60s°F to mid 80s°F (18-29°C).
- Additional Information: Solo and relay divisions. Wetsuits are allowed, but will have their own awards category. Fundraiser for the American Diabetes Association.
- www.alaskateamada.com/

Open Water Swimming Haikus and Poems



Haiku to the Yacker

Sgt. Jim Cowhig, a Northeast Kingdom Open Water Swimming Association swimmer Newburyport, Massachusetts wrote a haiku about kayakers.

A **haiku** is a form of Japanese poetry that in English consists of 5, 7, and 5 syllables in three lines:

*smooth molded plastic
an oasis of safety
always at my side*

Phil White, the enthusiastic visionary behind the Northeast Kingdom Open Water Swimming Association (NEKOWSA) and "Be Kind to Your Yacker Week", created a wonderful poem celebrating kayakers, those friendly, selfless individuals who feed, navigate, safe-keep and escort swimmers on every possible open body of water on Earth:

Ode To My Yacker

*Yacker, My Yacker, wherever we roam
You water and feed me and guide my way home
Without you I'm nothing, a lost feckless soul
Locked in the lanes of my short little pool*

*But with paddle flashing and you by my side
The waters are open, the world is so wide
There's nothing we can't do, no challenge too great
One stroke at a time, my aquarian mate.*

Open Water Swimming Products

Swim Socks Product Review



Product: *Swim Socks*

Manufacturer: blueseventy

Price: *US\$30.00, £20, €30*

Description: *Neoprene socks prevent injury to the sole of foot when walking on rocky surfaces. The Swim Socks are form fitting to minimize water entry while swimming and keep your feet warm in cold water.*

Test Location: *We tested in California (USA) during January at (1) the Huntington Beach, known as Surf City, on its wide sandy beach when the water was 58°F (14°C), both in the early morning and mid-afternoon, (2) swimming pool in Seal Beach at a 5:00 am masters swim practice, (3) while kayaking in the Pacific Ocean, and (4) while walking at and near Mavericks, a famous surfing location near San Francisco.*

Sales Pitch: *Plush neoprene eliminates chaffing from plastic straps. Adjustable for any size ankle and fitting under or over clothing.*

Should You Buy It? *Yes – for specific open water purposes. [Click HERE to order.](#)*

Why? *The product, simply put, does what it says and is better suited for athletes in the open water – and less expensive – than typical surf booties.*

Upside: *The Swim Socks have multiple uses. Very importantly, they do keep your feet warmer – especially when they are not yet wet – and protected than they would if you go barefoot. You can use them for walking on cold sandy beaches, rocky surfaces near ocean and lake shorelines and the cold decks of outdoor pools in the winter, spring and fall. You can also use them while you are on an escort boat (or kayak) while escorting a fellow swimmer training or during a solo channel swim or marathon relay. They work well on boat decks and when you walk up on the shore, pier, jetty,*

Open Water Swimming Products

breakwater, dock, groin, boat landing, seawall, boat slip or wharf. The 'grilled' sole part of the Swim Socks effectively eliminate our worry about stepping on sharp rocks, shells and bits of glass on the shorelines and piers, especially when it is dark in the morning or night. They also work very well on the very cool pool deck and the walk from the parking lot to the pool. Unlike larger and bulkier surf booties, we found the Swim Socks were lighter, thinner and, therefore, more appropriate for an open water swimmer. You can also use the Swim Socks during your pool workouts that can add stress to your shoulders during pulling sets or specifically help you improve your up kick on your freestyle during kicking, sprint or normal freestyle sets. The Swim Socks can be folded up and placed inside your wetsuit or swimsuit if you no longer need them when you are swimming. If you only use them to walk to the water's edge, then they are light and do not take up much room in your bag.

Downside:

The Swim Socks are not waterproof and water gets inside, so the warmth level is not what you should expect when you enter the water. On the other hand, your feet will stay warm enough, especially if cold feet bother you or if you typically wear a wetsuit and feel your feet are always freezing. If you have a strong kick or start sprinting, then the Swim Socks can sag down and you feel the weight of the water as it pools in Swim Socks near your toes, whether you are in the open water or pool. Positively thinking, this feeling of having a bit of water pooling in the Swim Socks can be seen as a bit of an additional workout challenge. We thought of this sensation as a benefit, but we would definitely not want to do all – or even most – of our workouts with the Swim Socks. When used in a pool, the Swim Socks quickly sagged down from the ankles due to the constant turns which was more than a bit uncomfortable, especially when doing butterfly and breaststroke. But, for adding stress on your legs for freestyle/backstroke sets, it can be used effectively as our up kick always needs improvement.

Changes:

If we could re-design the product, we would either make the Swim Socks shorter (i.e., reduce the length that it rides up your ankles) or add some kind of fabric or Velcro above the ankles so the Swim Socks would not sag. But other than that, we think the thickness and overall design achieve its ultimate aim: keeping your feet warmer and protecting against injury.

Overall:

Swim Socks are not an absolutely must-buy like a pair of goggles, but blueseventy did a very good job with this product. The needs – cold feet and injury protection – were identified and the Swim Socks definitely meet those needs. The Swim Socks would be a great gift for triathletes, for a parent or friend who is a masters swimmer, for a swimmer who trains in the open water during the winter, spring or fall, for friends who support you on your channel swim or during marathon training, or for yourself if your feet get cold or need protection on boats, kayaks, lidos or shorelines.

Open Water Swimming Products

TRISLIDE Product Review



Product: *TRISLIDE, the anti-chafe continuous spray skin lubricant*

Manufacturer: *SBR Sport, Inc.*

Price: *US\$13.45 for a 4 oz. aerosol spray can*

Description: *Anti-chafing skin lubricant in an easy-to-apply continuous aerosol spray*

Sales Pitch: *Keeping you comfortable and keeping you competitive*

The liquid silicone-based TRISLIDE promotes easy and quick entry/exit from wetsuits and swimsuits and prevents chafing, blistering, irritation in the water and out. TRISLIDE does not damage neoprene materials as other petroleum-based products and cooking sprays do.

Would I Buy It? *Yes, without a doubt. [Click HERE to order.](#)*

Test Location: *We tested in four locations among world-class athletes and beginner open water swimmers:*

- (1) In Italy in July at the 2009 World Swimming Championships in the warm Mediterranean Sea under slightly windy conditions;*
- (2) in the warm Copacabana Beach in November in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil at the 2009 Rei do Mar Desafio (King of the Sea Challenge) pro race;*
- (3) in Santa Monica, California during July at the Tower 26 ocean practices during both glassy-flat and rough conditions when waves got up to 3 feet; and*
- (4) in a 25-yard pool in Seal Beach, California at a 5:00 am masters swim practice.*

Why? *The liquid-silicone product, simply put, does what it says: it is an extremely effective anti-chafing lubrication that prevents friction and, very importantly, leaves no mess.*

Open Water Swimming Products

Upside: *TRISLIDE has multiple benefits and can be used by triathletes, runners, walkers, rowers, surfers and cyclists. Very importantly, TRISLIDE can be easily removed with soap and water – something that cannot be done with lanolin. TRISLIDE is great to help you quickly slip out of a wetsuit or a speedsuit, a key benefit during a competitive triathlon. TRISLIDE is also not as messy as Vaseline® if it incidentally get smeared on your goggles. TRISLIDE was purposefully produced as an aerosol and not a gel or a stick. The spray application is a sanitary application because it does not harbor bacteria, whereas a stick directly touches the skin. Due to the aerosol spray application, your hands stay free - and clean - which is not always the case with Vaseline® or lanolin.*

Test: *During an hour-long ocean workout, TRISLIDE was tested by 16 triathletes and open water swimmers who sprayed TRISLIDE on one side of their body (underarms, inside thighs, ankles, shoulder or necks) and compared it with their other side (either covered with Vaseline, other lubrication products or nothing at all). The athletes were asked to rate the TRISLIDE on a scale of 10 with 10 being excellent and 1 being poor.*

The results of this side-by-side test were as follows:

Athlete #1 (male): TRISLIDE did not chafe on left side. Other side with other product chafed.

Athlete #2 (female, age 32): TRISLIDE worked, but would try something else, 5 out of 10.

Athlete #3 (male, age 47): No chafing

Athlete #4 (female): No chafing, quick to get wetsuit off, 10 out of 10

Athlete #5 (male, age 34): TRISLIDE and the other product were about the same, 3 out of 10.

Athlete #6 (female, age 44): No chafing, TRISLIDE on 1 side, chafed on other side, 10 out of 10.

Athlete #7 (male, age 45): Put TRISLIDE around neck, 10 out of 10.

Athlete #8 (male, age 38): No chafing on neck, 10 out of 10 compared to the other products.

Athlete #9 (male, age 44): Put TRISLIDE under arms, 10 out of 10.

Athlete #10 (male, age 41): Good, put TRISLIDE around neck, 8 out of 10.

Athlete #11 (female, age 55): Put TRISLIDE on neck, 8 out of 10, better than the other products.

Athlete #12 (female, age 39): Put TRISLIDE on neck, better than others, 10 out of 10.

Athlete #13 (male, age 40): Put TRISLIDE all over, slicker, cleaner, easier to get wetsuit off.

Athlete #14 (male, age 34): Works well around neck/feet/ankles/wrists, 10 out of 10.

Athlete #15 (male, age 30): No chafing, but about the same. Nothing special.

Athlete #16 (male, age 40): Put TRISLIDE all over, was using other products, 10 out of 10.

Downside: *Like any lubricant used in the open water, TRISLIDE does come off over time. But for most triathletes who will be in the water for at most 2.4 miles, TRISLIDE will last sufficiently long. It is also lasts long enough so in the T1 transition, the triathletes can slip off their wetsuit and get into their cycling gear in a few seconds.*

Note: we did not test in the water for over one hour, but we cannot imagine that the product will stay on longer than lanolin on the human

Open Water Swimming Products

skin. But certainly for swims under one hours, it is an independently confirmed to be sufficient and superior to other commercially available products.

Changes: *We cannot imagine a re-design of the product that would improve the product, other than make the container larger. The small container (4 fluid ounces) is good for 15 – 20 applications, depending on how much is used during on each application.*

Overall: *If you chafe and compete in races 5K and under, TRISLIDE is a nearly an absolutely must-buy like a pair of goggles. The needs – chafing, blistering and slipping in and out of wetsuits – were identified and the TRISLIDE definitely met those needs. Overall, the product is a job extraordinarily well done and is colorfully and professionally presented and marketed. TRISLIDE would be a great gift for triathletes or open water swimmers.*

Open Water Swimming Products

The StingMate® Story

Smithwick's StingMate® is one of the sponsors of the Global Open Water Swimming Conference. The story behind how, why, where and when StingMate® was invented is interesting, an unusual, but absolutely true story.

Julie and Webb Willmott were visiting a drug store while on vacation in Destin, Florida when a man rushed in because his wife had just been stung by a jellyfish.

The man was panicking with his wife in pain. He initially ran up to Webb and Julie with a tube of Preparation H and asked if that would work on a jellyfish sting. Webb, who has a masters degree in chemistry and pharmacology, quickly utilized his professional know-how and went over to the over-the-counter section. He grabbed four different products, mixed them together and...viola...StingMate® was born.

After the incident, Julie asked her husband if those ingredients could be combined into one. Webb consulted with his multiple patent-holding father and refined, remixed and reformulated the original product. Within a few weeks, the product was finished, but the team was not satisfied. They spent two more years before their commercial release and handed out over 10,000 free samples to beach and ocean rescue units, life guards, the diving community, surfers and swimmers all over the world for feedback.

After receiving overwhelming positive feedback on its effectiveness, StingMate® was launched and now the product is packaged in a convenient spray bottle that includes a neutralizing gel. The primary ingredients of acetic acid (vinegar) and menthol is effective because it inactivate the stinging jellyfish cells. The menthol provides a cooling sensation and the spray formulation provides immediate relief for the affected area, small or large, since the patented gel does not run off the body as would plain vinegar. The gel suspends the stinging cells and allows remaining ones to be simply scraped off the skin with any straight edge card.

From a pharmacy in Florida to beaches around the world, the success story of StingMate® is wonderful to hear.



Buy Now!

Open Water Swimming Products

Vaseline and Lanolin



As everyone from professional marathon swimmers to English Channel swimmers know, open water swimmers often apply Vaseline® to their underarms, inside thighs, chin and/or neck in order to prevent chafing.

Lanolin is also often used to help reduce the initial impact of cold water.

Lanolin is a greasy, fatty substance, insoluble in water, that is extracted from wool-bearing animals used to coat the skin of swimmers, especially to friction points (e.g., underarms, inside thighs, chin and neck) in order to prevent chafing or help reduce the impact of cold water. Lanolin can generally be found in pharmacies or ordered at medical supply stores throughout the U.S. and Western Europe

Most experienced swimmers ask their coach or trainer to firmly spread a thin layer of lanolin on their skin shortly before entering the water. Many coaches use rubber gloves to apply the lanolin which can be difficult to get off or have a towel readily available to wipe off.

It is important to firmly press the lanolin into the skin and keep away from the swimmer's goggles, palms, ankles and inside of their forearms. Gobs of lanolin are generally not used.

Photo by Dr. Jim Miller of world champion Britta Kamrau with lanolin before the 2007 World Swimming Championships in Melbourne.

Open Water Swimming Products

Pool-Mate



Pool-Mate is one of the most innovative and useful products to hit the swimming market in years. It is selling off the shelves - especially to those who prefer to focus on other things other than counting laps.

It is most interesting (and magical) how the intelligent Pool-Mate watch automatically knows how many laps you are doing, how many arm strokes you are doing, how far you have swum and the number of calories you have burned while you swim.

The watch does what it does because it contains accurate motion sensors and unique software algorithms that automatically recognize each swim stroke and change of lap. The Pool-Mate displays and stores Lap Count, Time, Average Strokes per Lap, Speed, Distance, Calories and Efficiency data.

With over 10,000 watches sold in over 60 countries since it was first launched, CEO Lisa Irlam has been recognized for her vision and business acumen, being named Innovator of the Year in 2009 by Enterprising Women.

The only thing an open water swimmer could additionally want from this outstanding product is a water thermometer function - but since it was developed for pool swimmers, it certainly achieved its goals.

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims



After years of research traveling around the country, participating in, observing and reporting on short swims, pier swims, river swims, marathon swims, charity swims, pro swims, cold-water swims and tropical events in lakes, rivers, bays, oceans, rowing basins and reservoirs, America's Top 50 Open Water Swims have been subjectively selected.

Events with long histories, races with many participants or races held in historical or beautiful locations were given a priority.

1. Manhattan Island Marathon Swim

- Location: Around Manhattan Island in New York City, New York.
- Course: Complete counter-clockwise circumnavigation of Manhattan Island, starting and finishing near Wall Street.
- Distance: 28.5 miles
- Date: July
- Description: Field limited to 25 solo swimmers and 18 relay teams that start and finish at Battery Park City. Fields sells out in 90 minutes. Race first held in 1927. Substantial surface chop and strong tidal pull are possible. Water temperature varies between 64 – 67°F (17 – 19°C). Salt water around Manhattan Island may also include random jetsam and flotsam. A Qualifying Swim must be completed before application will be accepted. NYC Pro Swim also conducts several open water events.
- Additional Information: NYC Swim also host the 1.3-mile Lady Liberty Swim in May, the 1-mile Park to Park Swim in June, the 2-mile Governors Island Swim in June that always sells out, the 1.5K Riverside Park Tune Up Swim in July, the 1K Brooklyn Bridge Swim in September that always sells out, the 5.85-mile Little Red Lighthouse Swim in September, the 17.5-mile Ederle Swim in October, and the NYC Pro Swim in August.
- www.nycswim.com

2. Waikiki Roughwater Swim

- Location: South shore of Oahu Island in Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Course: Start at the east end of Waikiki Beach, under the foot of Diamond Head Volcano, and finish at the west end at the Hilton Hawaiian Village.
- Distance: 2.4 miles
- Date: Labor Day, September
- Description: Swimmers swim over beautiful coral beds and colorful marine life in a picturesque course. High surf and strong currents on occasion.
- Additional Information: Now in its 38th year. The inspiration behind the 2.4-mile swim leg of the Ironman Triathlon has grown to attract participants of all ages and backgrounds

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

from dozens of countries and every U.S. state. In 1970, the race saw 4 women and 32 men swim across Waikiki.

- www.waikikiroughwaterswim.com

3. La Jolla Rough Water Swim

- Location: La Jolla Cove, La Jolla, California (just north of San Diego).
- Course: Start and finish at the picturesque La Jolla Cove, a natural amphitheater for ocean swims.
- Distance: 250 yards, 1 mile and 3 miles.
- Date: September (Labor Day)
- Description: Known as *America's Premier Rough Water Swim*. Began in 1916 when 7 men swam 1.7 miles in the beautiful La Jolla Cove near San Diego, California. By 1925, 8 men and 11 women swam the race. By 1950, 105 swimmers entered. In 1984, over 1,000 swimmers entered. In 1998, 2,255 swimmers participated, but in 1999, a cap of 2,000 was placed on the number of swimmers in order to maintain the high standards of the organizing committee.
- Additional Information: Marine life and kelp are abundant. Water clarity is among the best along the West Coast. Water temperature can be in the low 60°'s F.
- www.ljrws.com

4. Great Chesapeake Bay Swim

- Location: Across Maryland's Chesapeake Bay.
- Course: Point-to-point race.
- Distance: 4.4 miles
- Date: June
- Description: In 1982, a 21-year-old local swimmer was the first to cross the Chesapeake Bay in memory of his father. In 1983, two swimmers entered the first official race and 60 swimmers participated in the second year. The swim grew to 870 entrants by 1990, with finishers ranging from 12 to 76 years old. In order to maintain high safety standards, the organizing committee now limits the race to 600 swimmers. It takes less than 18 minutes for the entire field of 600 swimmers to be filled up using the current online entry system.
- Additional Information: Strong currents on occasion; most popular swim on East Coast.
- www.bayswim.com

5. RCP Tiburon Mile

- Location: From San Francisco Bay's Angel Island to the shores of downtown Tiburon, California.
- Course: Cold-water point-to-point swim in the beautiful San Francisco Bay.
- Distance: 1 mile
- Date: October
- Description: Strong currents on occasion and very cold water (around 60°F) highlight a charity swim for the Special Olympics of Northern California (over \$650,000 raised).
- Additional Information: Outside of the Olympics and World Championships, the fastest and most prestigious race in the world where over 400 age-group and collegiate swimmers compete with pool Olympians and world open water champion swimmers

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

from over 20 countries, including Russia, Australia, South Africa, Italy, Brazil, Mexico and Canada. US\$10,000 to overall male and female winners.

- www.rcptiburonmile.com

6. Tampa Bay Marathon Swim

- **Location:** Tampa Bay, Florida.
- **Course:** Covers the length of Tampa Bay, from the Sunspree Resort in St. Petersburg to the Ben T. David Beach on the Courtney Campbell Causeway.
- **Distance:** 24 miles
- **Date:** Late June or July
- **Description:** Warm-water race that features pods of dolphins following swimmers on occasion.
- **Additional Information:** Escort boat required. Possibility of high winds, surface chop and poor visibility. Open Water Boot Camp also offered.
- www.distancematters.com

7. Maui Channel Relay

- **Location:** In the Auau Channel between the island of Lanai and the island of Maui in Hawaii.
- **Course:** Start at the north side of Lanai on an uninhabited stretch of beach and finish on the south side of Maui.
- **Distance:** 9.6 miles
- **Date:** September
- **Description:** Swimmers cross one of the most beautiful channels in the world as they gaze upon 5 islands (Lanai, Maui, Molokai, Oahu and Hawaii) if the weather permits. Generally calm conditions, colorful marine life and clear warm cobalt blue water makes this event the most popular relay swim in the world. Marine life, strong winds and strong currents on occasion.
- **Additional Information:** The six-person relay race, started as a competition in 1972 between the Waikiki Swim Club and the Olympic Club of San Francisco, has now grown to over 60 teams of six and dozens of solo swimmers from numerous states, Australia, Japan and Taiwan. Swimmers rotate every 30 minutes in the only masters inter-island relay race in the world.
- www.mauichannelswim.com

8. The Alcatraz Challenge

- **Location:** From Alcatraz Island in the middle of San Francisco Bay to East Beach near Presidio Park in San Francisco, California.
- **Course:** Point-to-point swim within the view of the Golden Gate Bridge and the picturesque San Francisco skyline.
- **Distance:** 2.4 miles (current-aided)
- **Date:** August
- **Description:** Strong currents, marine life and very cold water (under 60°F).
- **Additional Information:** Was initially held in 1981 with fewer than 100 participants. In 2007, there are now seven annual 1.5-mile races, each of which sells out months in

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

advance. Nearly 6,000 participants from all over the world travel to San Francisco to test themselves against the 55° waters and powerful currents.

- www.alcatrazchallenge.us

9. Pacific Open Water

- Location: Marine Stadium in Long Beach, California.
- Course: Flat-water course in still, flat waters of the 1932 Los Angeles Olympics rowing basin.
- Distance: 2K and 4K (Open Water Pursuit)
- Date: June
- Description: Open Water Pursuit is a race with teams of 3 or 4 swimmers who start, swim and finish together. The aquatic pelotons are set off in staggered starts.
- Additional Information: Drafting, positioning, navigating and pacing are essential skills that are required for these Open Water Pursuit races.
- www.pacificopenwater.com

10. Lake Travis Relay

- Location: Lake Travis in Austin, Texas.
- Course: Point-to-point course that starts in the main basin of Lake Travis at Mansfield Dam Park and finishes on the dock of The Pier.
- Distance: 12 miles.
- Date: October.
- Description: A 6-person relay swim (and up to 10 solo swimmers) that finishes at The Pier restaurant. The Lake Travis Relay is recognized by the Austin American-Statesman as one of Austin's top ten recreation events (along with the Money Box Cap 2k which is Austin's signature open water swimming event). Swimmers in this 6-person relay swim 20-minute legs, then 15-minute legs, and then 10-minute legs in the most popular lake in Texas. Water temperature is between 78-80°F.
- Additional Information: The Lake Travis Relay is one of the 9 open water events conducted by the American Swimming Association around the Austin area. The series includes the **Money Box Cap 2k Open Water**, **Open Water Texas High School State Championships** in Austin (2K swim in 70°F water in Lady Bird Lake in May), the **Volente Beach Open Water Family Gala** in Lake Travis (200-meter, 400-meter and 1-mile swims from Volente Beach around Starnes Island and back in June in 78°F water), **The Highland Lakes Challenge** in Highland Lakes, Austin (stage swims in 5 lakes in 5 days in October in 74 – 78°F water), the **Dam 5k** in Mansfield Dam Park in Lake Travis in November, the **ASA Open Water Collegiate National Championships** in Mansfield Dam Park in Lake Travis (5K in November in 74°F water), and **The Quarries Open Water Festival** in Lake Travis (1-mile, 400-meter, 800-meter, 1-mile and 1-mile (4 x 400 relay swims) in The Quarries in November in 73°F water), and the **Polar Bear Swim** (200-meter and 1-mile swims in the main basin of Lake Travis, 59°F, on New Year's Day).
- www.americanswimmingassociation.com

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

11. North Shore Surf 'n Sea Swim Series

- Location: Along the famous north shore of Oahu, Hawaii.
- Course: A series of four warm-water point-to-point swims along the North Shore.
- Distance: 1-mile, 1.2-mile, 1.6-mile and 2.3-mile swims
- Date: Held every two weeks from late June to early August
- Description: **The Raging Isle Sprint** is a one-mile swim that begins at Sunset Beach and finishes at Ehukai Beach Park (Pipeline). The 1.2-mile **Cholo's Waimea Bay Swim** is followed by **Chun's Reef to Waimea Bay 1.6-mile Swim** and the **Surf & Sea North Shore Challenge**, a 2.3-mile swim from Pipeline to Waimea Bay.
- Additional Information: Strong currents on occasion and abundant marine life along beautiful beaches, crystal clear water and enjoyable open water swimming competition from all ages and abilities.
- www.hawaiiswim.com/nsss.html

12. Swim Around Key West

- Location: Key West, Florida.
- Course: Clockwise course around Key West, the southernmost tip of Florida.
- Distance: 12.5 miles
- Date: June
- Description: Beautiful, shallow, generally calm, warm-water (85°F) course with the bottom of the ocean visible throughout the course. Abundant marine life includes Conch shells, manna rays, seaweed, sting rays, sea turtles, very docile nurse sharks and colorful tropical fish.
- Additional Information: Race has a unique Lightning Rule: *if a lightening storm threatens the swimmer, the swimmer may swim to shore or get into their escort boat and head for shelter. Once the threat passes the swimmer may re-enter the water in as near to the location he/she exited the water as possible. The swimmer will not be disqualified for the event; however the clock continues to run.*
- www.fkccswimaroundkeywest.com

13. Catalina Channel

- Location: Channel between Santa Catalina Island that lies 21 miles off the coast of Southern California.
- Course: Shortest point-to-point course is from Emerald Bay on Santa Catalina Island to the San Pedro Peninsula, near Cabrillo Beach.
- Distance: 21 miles
- Date: Solo and relay attempts generally made from June to October
- Description: A deep-water channel that is comparable to the English Channel in terms of water conditions, difficulty, distance and the physical and mental challenges to the swimmer. Mid-60°F water with marine life seen on occasion, including migrating whales and large pods of dolphins.
- Additional Information: First successful swim was in January, 1927 when Canadian George Young won \$25,000 in the Wrigley Ocean Marathon Swim in 15 hours and 44 minutes.
- www.swimcatalina.org

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

14. Trans Tahoe Relay

- Location: Lake Tahoe in the states of Nevada and California.
- Course: From Sand Harbor Beach in Nevada to Skylandia Beach, Lake Forest, California.
- Distance: 11.5 miles
- Date: July
- Description: 6-person relay at an altitude of more than 6,200 feet. It is a cold-water (55-60°F), clear-water event that requires a high level of physical fitness.
- Additional Information: Now in its 32nd year, the popular and prestigious relay race is the only swim race that crosses two state lines. Wetsuits are not allowed.
- www.olyclub.com/html_general/oc_events-frameset.html

15. Molokai Channel (or Kaiwi Channel)

- Location: Deep-water (701 meters) channel between the western coast of Molokai Island and the eastern coast of Oahu in Hawaii.
- Course: Inter-island swim in the middle of the Pacific Ocean where strong winds and turbulent surface chop predominate.
- Distance: 27 miles
- Date: As conditions permit.
- Description: Extraordinarily strong currents; extremely large rolling swells, strong winds and abundant marine life always present a challenge for solo swimmers.
- Additional Information: Beautiful views of Oahu and Molokai that was first crossed in September 1961 by Keo Nakama in 15 hours and 30 minutes.
- www.hawaiiswim.org/hawaiianChannel/kaiwiChannel.html

16. Nike Swim Miami

- Location: Miami, Florida.
- Course: Rectangular course in the Miami Marine Stadium.
- Distance: 1-mile, 5K and 10K
- Date: April
- Description: Swimmers enjoy the beautiful Miami downtown skyline in warm waters.
- Additional Information: Several Olympians and Olympic medalists take part in a highly competitive and enjoyable event for swimmers of all ages and abilities.
- www.MiamiSportsInternational.com

17. Bridge-to-Bridge 10K Swim

- Location: San Francisco, California.
- Course: From the Golden Gate Bridge to the Bay Bridge during a 3.3-knot flood tide in San Francisco Bay.
- Distance: 10K
- Date: May
- Description: Limited to 30 elite swimmers with extensive cold-water experience. Cold water (under 60°F), but spectacular view of the Golden Gate Bridge, Fisherman's Wharf and the San Francisco downtown skyline throughout the event.

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

- Additional Information: Water World Swim conducts numerous clinics, Alcatraz Island crossings and workouts in addition to five other rigorous open water races in San Francisco Bay.
- www.waterworldswim.com

18. Open Water Festival

- Location: Fort Myers Beach, Florida.
- Course: Warm-water loop course along the clear waters of Ft. Myers.
- Distance: 1000-yard, 1.5K, 2.5K, 1-mile, 5K, 10K and 25K swims and a 1-mile Sunset Open Water Dash-for-Cash event
- Date: May
- Description: Plenty of sunshine, warm water and competition for novice and experienced open water swimmers of all ages. Doubles as the USA Swimming national champion events. Surface chop can be significant with offshore winds.
- Additional Information: Also serves as the selection race for USA Swimming National Open Water teams that compete in international competitions.
- www.openwaterfestival.org

19. Lake Berryessa Open Water Swim

- Location: Lake Berryessa in northern California.
- Course: Buoys at approximate 200-yard intervals help guide swimmers around the beautiful lake in Northern California.
- Distance: 1-mile and 2-mile swims (wetsuit and non-wetsuit divisions) for masters, 1-mile swim for ages 18 and under, 500-yard swim for ages 8-10
- Date: June
- Description: An extremely competitive race in all age groups with the expected water temperature between 65-70°F. Surface chop can increase with winds.
- Additional Information: Now in its 28th year, the 1-mile course goes around Flamingo Island the popular 2-mile course goes around Goat Island. Large picnic is held after the races. Part of the U.S. Masters Swimming **H2O Open Series** that includes the **Jim McDonnell Lake Swims** in Reston, Virginia, **Big Shoulders** in Chicago and **Tropical Splash** in Sarasota, Florida.
- www.damfast.org/berrywelcome.html and www.usms.org/events/h2openseries

20. 1 Mile Against the Tide Swim for Breast Cancer

- Location: Hopkinton State Park in Hopkinton, Massachusetts.
- Course: Easy-to-navigate course in a flat water lake.
- Distance: 1 mile
- Date: June
- Description: Fund-raising event to benefit the Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition. Casual fitness/recreational swim and the more challenging competitive swim enables swimmers of all ages and abilities to participate.
- Additional Information: Race organizer also hosts the Karen Smyers Open Water Swim Clinic at Hopkinton State Park in Hopkinton, Massachusetts, the YMCA Cape Cod Swim

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

Clinic at YMCA Cape Code in West Barnstable, Massachusetts in June, and the 1 Mile Against the Tide Swim for Breast Cancer in Nickerson State Park on Cape Cod in August.

- www.mbcc.org/swim

21. Death Valley Open Water Swim Meet

- Location: East Beach in Hartwell Lake on the Clemson University campus in Clemson, South Carolina.
- Course: Out-and-back swim with buoy markers every 100 meters.
- Distance: ½-kilometer, 1K, 2K, 3K, 5K and 10K
- Date: June
- Description: Calm, fresh water lake with water temperature expected to be in the low 80's°F.
- Additional Information: Also doubles as the South Carolina Open Water State Championships.
- www.clemsonaquaticteam.org

22. Glen S. Hummer Huntington Mile and 5K Swim

- Location: Lake Clare, Huntington, Indiana.
- Course: Flat water swim around a ¼-mile cable covered by intermediate buoys.
- Distance: 0.5-mile, 1-mile and 5K
- Date: July
- Description: In-water start and finish.
- Additional Information: Excellent spectator viewing from shoreline. Race organizer also hosts the Indiana State Open Water Championships (750-yard, 1.5K, 2.25K and 3K swims) in same location. USA Swimming national open water team coaches also conduct an Indiana Age Group Open Water Camp the day before the Huntington Mile.
- www.huntingtonmile.org

23. Chris Greene Lake 2-mile Cable Swim

- Location: Charlottesville, Virginia.
- Course: Lake swim
- Distance: 1 mile and 2 miles
- Date: June
- Description: A precisely measured 2-mile cable swim where U.S. Master Swimming national records are maintained. There are two heats (clockwise and counter-clockwise direction), and the start is staggered in waves of 10 swimmers, seeded fastest-to-slowest in 30-second intervals.
- Additional Information: Record was set in 1988 by James Kegley.
- www.cableswim.org/

24. Swim Across America Swim

- Location: Boston Harbor, Massachusetts.
- Course: Start and finish at Rowes Wharf in downtown Boston.
- Distance: 22 miles
- Date: July

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

- Description: Relay where each swimmer swims 15-minute sessions.
- Additional Information: Series has generated over \$20 million to the research, treatment and prevention of cancer. Series organizer also hosts six other Swim Across America events where many Olympians participate. Events includes **Swim Across America Greenwich Swims** (½-mile and 1-mile swims) in Greenwich, Connecticut in June, the **Swim Across America Nantasket Beach Swim** in Boston, Massachusetts in July, the **Swim Across America Lake Michigan Swim** (½-mile, 1-mile, 1.5-mile and 3-mile swims) in Lake Michigan in Chicago, Illinois in July, the **Swim Across America Long Island Sound Swims** (1-mile, 4-mile and 6-mile swims) in Westchester County, New York in July, the **Swim Across America Sound to the Cove Swim** (1-mile, 5K and 10K swims) in Long Island Sound, Glen Cove, New York in August, and the **Swim Across America San Francisco Bay Relay Swim** (10 miles) in October.
- www.swimacrossamerica.org

25 Semana Nautica Summer Sports Festival Swims

- Location: East Beach in Santa Barbara, California.
- Course: Loop course parallel to gorgeous East Beach.
- Distance: 3 miles
- Date: 4th of July weekend
- Description: Generally calm conditions where rough and windy conditions can occur. Kelp and flotsam can be occasionally found.
- Additional Information: Race organizer also conducts the **6-mile Ocean Swim** at Goleta Beach in July and **1-mile Ocean Swim** in East Beach in July.
- www.semananautica.com

26. Charles River 1 Mile Swim

- Location: Rick Dock, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Course: Loop course between the Harvard and Longfellow Bridge.
- Distance: 1 mile
- Date: June
- Description: In-the-water start in the historic Charles River.
- Additional Information: Limited to 125 swimmers. Entrant maximum number rapidly fills up.
- www.charlesriverswimmingclub.org

27. Dwight Crum Pier-to-Pier Swim

- Location: Hermosa Beach and Manhattan Beach in Southern California.
- Course: From the south side Hermosa Beach Pier to the north side of the Manhattan Beach Pier.
- Distance: 2 miles
- Date: August
- Description: Point-to-point swim parallel to the shore with hundreds of safety personnel in boats and on paddleboards. Clear water, competitive field and festive atmosphere create an enjoyable event.
- Additional Information: Part of the International Surf Festival.

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

- www.surffestival.org/Swim/swim.pdf

28. Point to La Pointe Swim

- Location: In Lake Superior, Bayfield, Wisconsin.
- Course: From Bayfield to Madeline Island.
- Distance: 2 miles
- Date: August
- Description: Straight course to island from Bayfield, a small city of 611 on the shores of Lake Superior in northernmost Wisconsin.
- Additional Information: Pristine beautiful lake with clear waters in the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Wetsuits are recommended. Event serves as a fundraiser for the local swimming pool and recreation center.
- www.bayfieldrecenter.com/Point_to_LaPointe_Swim.html

29. Pennock Island Challenge

- Location: In Ketchikan, Alaska.
- Course: Around Pennock Island in the Tongass Narrows.
- Distance: 8.2 miles
- Date: August
- Description: Current-assisted course sheltered from large surf everywhere except the sound end. Water temperature is between mid-50's°F to low 60's°F. Air temperature will range from the mid-60's°F to mid 80's°F. Swimmers can enter as solo and as members of a relay. Wetsuits are allowed, but will have their own awards category.
- Additional Information: Fundraiser for the American Diabetes Association.
- www.alaskateamada.com

30. Boston Light 8-mile Swim

- Location: Boston, Massachusetts.
- Course: From Little Brewster Island to L Street Beach.
- Distance: 8 miles
- Date: August
- Description: Strong winds (up to 45 mph in recent years), cold water (60°F in recent years) and oncoming waves (3-4 feet in height in recent years) are possible.
- Additional Information: Called the "*Granddaddy of American open-water marathons*". 100th anniversary of the earliest account of the Boston Light Swim.
- www.bostonlightswim.org

31. St. Vincent's Medical Center's SWIM Across the Sound

- Location: Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- Course: From Port Jefferson, New York to Captain's Cove Marina in Bridgeport, Connecticut.
- Distance: 25K
- Date: August
- Description: Solo and relay swimmers.

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

- Additional Information: Now in its 21st year, more than 250 swimmers participated in 2007, including 39 relay teams, raising over \$350,000 for cancer prevention, education and support programs sponsored by St. Vincent's Medical Center's SWIM Across the Sound. 60 escort boats support the field (solo and relay swimmers) that attracts athletes from many states and several countries.
- www.swimacrossthesound.org

32. Big Shoulders 5K Lake Michigan Swim

- Location: Lake Michigan in Chicago, Illinois.
- Course: Triangular course starting and finishing at the Ohio Street Beach.
- Distance: 2.5K and 5K
- Date: September
- Description: One loop is 2.5K. Chilly, windy conditions very possible. Water temperature can vary between 65°F and 80°F. Can view the impressive Chicago skyline.
- Additional Information: Also has a separate wetsuit division. Event founded by Olympic gold medalist, Bill Mulliken. Part of the U.S. Masters Swimming **H2O Open Series** that includes the **Jim McDonnell Lake Swims** in Reston, Virginia, **Lake Berryessa Swim** in northern California and **Tropical Splash** in Sarasota, Florida.
- www.bigshoulders.org and www.usms.org/events/h2openseries

33. CAST Classic Open Water Swim

- Location: Independence Point, Lake Coeur d'Alene in the Idaho Panhandle.
- Course: Rectangular-shaped course on the beautiful Lake Coeur d'Alene
- Distance: 2.5K (one loop), 5K (two loops) and 10K (four loops)
- Date: August
- Description: All races start at the same time and use the same course
- www.swimcast.net/index.php?page_id=539

34. Deer Creek Open Water Marathon Swim

- Location: Deer Creek Reservoir, Walsburg Bay, Utah.
- Course: All courses hug the coastline of Deer Creek.
- Distance: 1 mile, 5K, 10K and 10 miles
- Date: August
- Description: Flat water course in beautiful lake southeast of Salt Lake City.
- Additional Information: One of the handful of races in this part of the Rocky Mountain range where the altitude is 5417 feet (1651 meters), adding another element to the swim.
- www.deercreekopenwater.com/

35. Huntington Beach Pier Swim

- Location: Around the Huntington Beach Pier, Huntington Beach, California.
- Course: Swim around the longest concrete pier in California.
- Distance: 0.5 miles depending on the tide
- Date: June
- Description: Very large surf possible with very strong currents along pier. Winner combines strong swimming abilities with good body-surfing instincts and abilities.

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

- Additional Information: Now in its 58th consecutive year in the town known as Surf City U.S.A.

36. Potomac River 7.5-mile Swim for the Environment

- Location: Point Lookout State Park, Scotland, Maryland.
- Course: From the Potomac River where it meets the Chesapeake Bay, starting at Hull Neck, Virginia and finishing at Point Lookout State Park, Maryland.
- Distance: 7.5 miles
- Date: May
- Description: Picturesque peninsula formed by the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River.
- Additional Information: Starts in Virginia and ends in Maryland. Swim started in 1993. Each swimmer is escorted by a volunteer kayaker. With favorable conditions, the swimmers can finish in 3 hours or less.
- <http://artemis.crosslink.net/~cherylw/pr2008i.htm>

37. Lake Harriet 1 & 2 Mile Open Water Swims

- Location: Lake Harriet, Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- Course: Follow the perimeter of the lake.
- Distance: 1 mile and 2 miles
- Date: June
- Description: Low-key swims for swimmers of all ages and abilities.
- Additional Information: Water temperature is approximately 68°F.
- www.minnesotamasters.com

38. Hawaiian Christmas Loong Distance Swim

- Location: South shore of Oahu Island in Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Course: Start at the east end of Waikiki Beach, turn around at the other end of Waikiki and return to Kaimana Beach at the foot of the Diamond Head Volcano.
- Distance: 7K
- Date: December
- Description: Swimmers swim over beautiful coral beds and colorful marine life in a stunningly picturesque course. Large swells and strong currents on occasion.
- Additional Information: Now in its 28th year, the event has attracted many of the world's best open water swimmers over the years.
- www.hawaiiswim.com

39. Manitou Monster Lake Swim

- Location: YMCA Camp Manitou in New Auburn, Wisconsin.
- Course: Hexagonal course marked with buoys.
- Distance: 2 miles.
- Date: July
- Description: Low-key swim with 2-hour limit.
- Additional Information: Now in its 20th year whose main purposes are enjoyment and the sense of accomplishment.

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

- www.minnesotamasters.com

40. Independence Day 1-mile Bay Swim

- Location: Somers Point, New Jersey.
- Course: Loop course starting and ending on Kennedy Park.
- Distance: 1 mile
- Date: June
- Description: Easy-to-navigate swim in bay.
- Additional Information: Now in its 22nd year.
- www.lmsports.com

41. Columbus Swims

- Location: Alum Creek State Park Reservoir, Lewis Center, Ohio.
- Course: Triangular course in one of Ohio's largest inland body of water.
- Distance: 0.75K, 1.5K and 3K
- Date: June
- Description: Tree-lined shores, shale cliffs and sheltered inlets, near Columbus.
- Additional Information: Most swimmers compete in more than one race. Second race at Antrim Park in Columbus is in the spring-fed lake. All swims have a mass start and offer wetsuit and non-wetsuit divisions.
- www.fatrabbitracing.com

42. Arizona Open Water Swimming Series

- Location: Lakes in Arizona.
- Course: A series of races in Lake Pleasant, Saguaro Lake, Pleasant Harbor Marina and Tempe Town Lake.
- Distance: 1K, 2K and 4K
- Date: From May to November
- Description: Athletes can combine the 1K and 4K races in order to compete in the 5K race.
- Additional Information: Wetsuit and non-wetsuit divisions.
- www.dcbadventures.com

43. Harbor Springs Coastal Crawl

- Location: Little Traverse Bay of Lake Michigan at Harbor Springs, Michigan.
- Course: Start at Zorn Park (City Beach).
- Distance: 1 mile, 2 mile, 3 mile and 10K
- Date: August
- Description: Calm lake with refreshing 65°F water temperature.
- Additional Information: Also has a wetsuit division. 10K swim consists of 3 laps of a 2.05-mile course marked with buoys and a feeding station.
- www.coastalcrawl.org

44. Jim McDonnell Lake Swims

- Location: Lake Audubon, Reston, Virginia.

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

- Course: An interesting loop swim with clearly marked turn buoys in a flat-water lake.
- Distance: 1 mile and 2 miles
- Date: May
- Description: Water temperature can range from 60°F to 75°C with air temperatures in the 80's. Recently hosted the US Masters Swimming National Open Water Championships.
- Additional Information: Now in its 21st year, swim proceeds benefit the Lymphoma Foundation of America. The local Lake Audubon community pool is open for warm-up and warm-down swims. Wetsuits are permitted, but are awarded prizes only in the wetsuit divisions. An educational pre-race clinic is offered that covers the basics of open water swimming and allows swimmers to become familiarized with the course. Part of the U.S. Masters Swimming H2O Open Series that includes the **Lake Berryessa Swim** in northern California, **Big Shoulders** in Chicago and **Tropical Splash** in Sarasota, Florida.
- www.restonmasters.org/jmls/ and www.usms.org/events/h2openseries

45. Swim Buzzards Bay

- Location: New Bedford, Massachusetts.
- Course: From Davy's Locker Beach in New Bedford to Fort Phoenix in Fairhaven.
- Distance: 1.2 miles
- Date: July
- Description: Event is in warm, clean waters and separated into two waves: the first wave for more experienced swimmers and the second wave for swimmers who want a personal safety escort.
- Additional Information: Fundraiser for The Coalition for Buzzards Bay.
- www.savebuzzardsbay.org

46. Save The Bay Swim

- Location: In Narragansett Bay, Rhode Island.
- Course: From the Naval Station Newport to Potter Cove in Jamestown.
- Distance: 1.7 miles
- Date: July
- Additional Information: Now in its 31st year. In 2007, 443 swimmers helped raise \$245,000.
- www.savebay.org

47. Atlantic City Pageant Ocean Swim

- Location: Atlantic City, New Jersey.
- Course: Starts at States Ave. through the surf, around Steel Pier and southwards to Missouri Ave.'s finish on the beach.
- Distance: 1.5 miles
- Date: September
- Description: Warm water ocean swim through surf and roughwater conditions when the winds are strong.
- Additional Information: Now in its 81st year, organized by the Atlantic City Beach Patrol that also organizes the **Yates Swim**.
- www.acbp.org

America's Top 50 Open Water Swims

48. Fort Lauderdale Rough Water Swim

- Location: D.C. Alexander Park, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
- Course: Start at Terramar Street and finish at SE 5st.
- Distance: ¼-mile, ½-mile, 1 mile and 5K
- Date: January
- Description: Swim in the warm Atlantic Ocean.
- Additional Information: Now in its 40th year. Parking for participants will be at the International Swimming Hall of Fame with shuttles transporting swimmers to the starting area. Formerly called the International Swimming Hall of Fame Ocean Mile Swim. An OpenWaterPlanet event affiliated with the **Aaron Peirsol's Race for the Oceans** and **Corpus Christi Open Water Festival**.
- www.openwaterplanet.com and www.lauderdaleswim.com

49. Hudson River Swim for Life

- Location: Kingsland Point Park in Sleepy Hollow, New York.
- Course: Starts at Nyack Memorial Park and finishes at Kingsland Point Park.
- Distance: 1 mile, 3 mile and 5K
- Date: September
- Description: 1-mile and 3-mile swims are non-competitive events that benefit the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.
- Additional Information: Now in its 17th year. 5K swim is a competitive event. 5K race participants are required to raise pledges for the Friends of Claire foundation for ALS Disease.
- www.hudsonriverswim.org

50. Fran Schnarr Memorial 5K Open Water Championships

- Location: Huntington Bay, New York
- Course: Counter-clockwise triangular course marked with orange buoys.
- Distance: 1K, 2K, 3K, 5K and 10K
- Date: July
- Description: The finish requires all swimmers to touch the target at the end of the pier.
- Additional Information: Swimmers from 19 states entered in 2007. In memory of Fran Schnarr who died in 1991 and was a supporter of the Flushing YMCA, the Flushing Flyers Aquatic Club and Metropolitan Swimming.
- www.huntswim.org

Outstanding Open Water Swimming Websites



The number of open water swimming websites providing valuable information in a visual dynamic manner continues to exponentially increase, some with online social networking functionalities.

Below is a short list of unique, educational and informative websites, listed in no particular order.

INDIVIDUALS

- **Lewis Gordon Pugh:** www.lewispugh.com
a multi-lingual website of an incredible swimming adventurer and environmentalist
- **Marcos Diaz:** www.marcosdiaz.net
the unique Dominican Republican swimmer with an entrepreneurial bent
- **Poliana Okimoto:** www.polianaokimoto.com
a Portuguese-language website of a top professional marathon swimmer from Brazil
- **Dan Martin:** <http://www.danmartinextreme.com>
the Global Triathlete who plans a swim across the Atlantic Ocean
- **Damian Blaum:** www.damianblaum.com.ar
a Spanish-language website of a top professional marathon swimmer
- **Natalie du Toit:** www.nataliedutoit.com
an incredible South African Olympian
- **Maarten van der Weijden:** www.maartenvanderweijden.com
the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim gold medalist and inspirational leukemia survivor
- **Britta Kamrau:** www.britta-kamrau.com
a top pro swimmer from Germany
- **Fran Crippen:** www.francrippen.com
a top pro swimmer from Philadelphia

EVENTS

- **Flowers Sea Swim:** www.flowersseaswim.com
an open water swimming gala event in the Cayman Islands
- **Midmar Mile:** www.midmarmile.co.za
a comprehensive portal to the world's largest open water swimming event

Outstanding Open Water Swimming Websites

- **New Zealand Ocean Swim Series:** www.oceanswim.co.nz
a comprehensive portal to the largest swim series in New Zealand
- **Great Swim:** www.greatswim.org
a visually dynamic portal for the Great Swims organized by the Nova International
- **NYC Swim:** www.nycswim.org
a comprehensive portal to open water swimming in and around New York City
- **Traversee Internationale du Lac St-Jean:** www.traversee.qc.ca
a bilingual French-English website of the Lac St-Jean professional and amateur swims
- **Santa Fe-Coronda:** www.santafecoronda.com
a Spanish-language website of the Sante Fe-to-Coronda pro marathon race in Argentina
- **King of the Sea Challenge (Rei do Mar Desafio):** www.reierainhadomar.com.br/
a portal to a series of unique professional-amateur races in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- **Pacific Swims:** www.pacificswims.com
a website of open water swimming events in the South Pacific
- **Pacific Open Water:** www.pacificopenwater.com
an event website for the open water swimming events in Long Beach, California
- **Water World Swim:** www.waterworldswim.com
San Francisco Bay cold-water swims
- **Fiji Swims:** www.fijiswims.com
a news source for open water swims in Fiji
- **Swim Across America:** www.swimacrossamerica.org
a portal of extremely successful charity open water swims across America
- **Tiburón Mile:** www.rcptiburonmile.com
the website of the world's most competitive professional short-distance open water swim
- **St. Croix Coral Reef Swim:** www.swimrace.com
the website of an open water race in beautiful St. Croix
- **World Open Water Swimming Championships:** www.roberval2010.ca
a description of the 2010 World Championships in Quebec, Canada
- **FINA:** www.fina.org
the revamped website of the world's governing body of aquatics
- **Rottneest Channel Swim:** www.rottnestchannelswim.com
the website of the world's largest long-distance channel race with a strong online community
- **Japan International Open Water Swimming Association:** www.openwater.gr.jp
a portal of Japanese open water swims and events
- **Waikiki Roughwater Swim:** www.waikikiroughwaterswim.com
2.4-mile ocean swim that started the Ironman craze with race results back to 1970
- **Ocean Racing Series:** www.oceanracingseries.com
a charity and competitive ocean racing series in Nelson Mandela Bay, South Africa
- **Vansbrosimningen:** www.vansbrosimningen.se
the website of the largest open water swimming event in Europe
- **Descenso a Nado de la ría de Navia:** www.rianaivia.com
a Spanish-language website of a popular Spanish river swim

Outstanding Open Water Swimming Websites

PRODUCTS

- **Swim Smooth:** www.swimsmooth.com
an easy-to-understand, helpful educational site to help you swim faster and smoother
- **Smithwick's StingMate:** www.stingmate.com
a website that showcases first-aid protection against jellyfish and stingray stings
- **TRISWIM:** www.tri-swim.com
a website that showcases hair, skin and skin lubrication products and goggle cleaners
- **Aqualoja:** www.aqualoja.net
a Portuguese website that combines event coverage with an online swim shop
- **SwimTrek:** www.swimtrek.com
a portal of unforgettable open water swimming holiday adventures
- **Pool-Mate:** www.swimovate.com
information on an intelligent swimming wristwatch
- **Watermans Applied Science:** <http://watermansappliedscience.com>
information on skin protection for outdoor sports enthusiasts

LIFESTYLE

- **Wild Swimming:** www.wildswimming.co.uk
a unique look and comprehensive presentation of open water swimming in Great Britain
- **European Open Water Swimming:** <http://openwaterswimming.eu>
a comprehensive news and event portal on European open water swimming events
- **The Water Is Open:** www.thewaterisopen.com
an open water swimming news, ranking, events and forum portal
- **10Kswim:** www.10Kswim.com
an educational open water swimming site
- **Cape Swim:** www.capeswim.com
information on open water swimming in Cape Town, South Africa
- **Ocean Swims:** www.oceanswims.com
a comprehensive news, race results and events portal, specializing in Australia
- **Cook Strait:** www.cookstraitswim.org.nz
a portal with facts and figures on the Cook Strait in New Zealand
- **Channel Swimmers:** www.thechannelswimmers.com
for those who want to swim, or have swum, the English Channel
- **Daily News of Open Water Swimming:** www.dailynewsopenwaterswimming.com
a daily news source from events around the world
- **Outdoor Swimming Society:** www.outdoorswimmingsociety.co.uk
a comprehensive and entertaining open water swimming portal for those in the U.K.
- **Santa Barbara Channel Swim Association:** www.santabarbarachannelswim.org
a description of events in the Santa Barbara Channel
- **Open Water Photography:** <http://flatstar.smugmug.com>
a website of great open water swimming photos

Outstanding Open Water Swimming Websites

- **Irish Channel:** www.bangorboat.com/page6.html
a list of solo swims in the cold-water Irish Channel
- **La Jolla Cove Swim Club:** www.lajollacoveswimclub.org
a California open water swimming club
- **Jersey Long Distance Swimming Club:** www.jerseyseaswims.org
an open water swimming club in Jersey
- **Open Water Planet:** www.openwaterplanet.com
open water swims promoted by Olympic pool swimming gold medalists
- **Channel Swimming & Piloting Federation:** www.channelswimming.net
the go-to site for English Channel solo and relay swimming aspirants
- **Channel Swimming Association:** www.channelswimmingassociation.com
the English Channel swimming website with a history dating back to 1927

Photo by Colin A Gift of Joe Orman in San Francisco Bay during New Year's Day Alcatraz Swim.

Five Oceans



Open water swimming adventurers like Lynne Cox, Ram Barkai (shown in Antarctica on left) and Lewis Gordon Pugh (shown on right above) are very special individuals.

Lynne, an inductee in the International Swimming Hall of Fame has an incredible and well-known record of open water swimming success. Ram is making his mark by sponsoring the Cadiz Freedom Swim and Africa Ice Swims in South Africa and doing extreme swims in Antarctica and Switzerland. Lewis is literally on another level – as he completed a glacial lake swim at 5300 meters (17,000) feet on Mt. Everest and is great promoter of climate change through his spectacular open water swims.

Lewis came up with the Five Oceans concept. Meeting the criteria of Five Oceans concept means a swimmer must complete a long-distance swim in all of the five oceans of the world: the Atlantic, Pacific, Indian, Southern (also known as the Antarctic) and Arctic Oceans.

Well-known for his 0°C water swims in the North Pole, Pugh also swam in the Atlantic Ocean (English Channel in 1992), the Arctic Ocean (North Cape in Norway in 2003), the Southern Ocean (Deception Island in sub-Antarctica in 2005), the Indian Ocean (Nelson Mandela Bay in South Africa in 2006) and Pacific Ocean (15K Manly Beach to the Sydney Opera House in Australia in 2006).

The Five Oceans concept is modeled on the Seven Summits concept where mountaineers climb the highest mountain on each of the 7 continents of the world. Lewis said, "*There's something magical about swimming in all five oceans of the world. Already nearly 100 mountaineers have done the Seven Summits, and it'll be fascinating to see how many swimmers take up this, the ultimate of challenges.*"

Open Water Swimming Clubs, Teams and Organizations



Back in the 1970's, a quiet, hard-working open water swimming team in Southern California, coached by Siga Rose, had a number of young ocean swimmers who trained constantly along the coast of California. Those swimmers - Lynne Cox, Penny Dean, John York - eventually became world-famous as they went on to set numerous records in channels around the world.

Dial forward forty years and there are now hundreds of open water swimming teams, groups, clubs, societies and associations flourishing around the world.

Here are a select few in no particular order:



1. **La Jolla Cove Swim Club**

The La Jolla Cove Swim Club trains in La Jolla Cove just north of San Diego. The club is an informal organization of friendly people who like to swim in the ocean with training sessions and sponsored activities once a month. The club organizes a Polar Bear Swim on New Year's Day, the 1.5-mile CYA Across the Bay Swim in June, and the 1.5- and 5-mile Tour of Buoys Swim in early August.

Club members and non-members swim in the beautiful La Jolla Cove daily usually around 6:30 am, 8:00 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am, 4:00 pm and other times throughout the day regardless of weather and water temperature throughout the year. Some swimmers swim less than 1K while others train for the English Channel, Catalina Channel, Cook Strait and other marathon swims.



2. **Santa Barbara Channel Swimming Association**

Open Water Swimming Clubs, Teams and Organizations

The Santa Barbara Channel Swimming Association has a number of informal and formal training sessions and events, all held north of Los Angeles in the Santa Barbara area, including the 26-mile Big Swim channel crossing. The members are extremely helpful and knowledgeable about swimming in the Santa Barbara Channel area and sanction a number of channel swims every year.

3. **Tower 26** (see photo on first page) is an ocean swimming group of nearly 300 seriously competitive athletes of all ages and abilities who enjoy (free) hard-core ocean workouts in Southern California, headquartered appropriately at Tower 26 on Santa Monica Beach. The workouts are geared towards learning and practicing positioning, drafting, turns, starts and finishes.

The practices are preceded by a warm-up period and end with presentations from a number of new product vendors and service providers, but the 60-minute in-the-water practices quickly morph into a high-intensity, high-energy friendly competition where a mix of world championship swimmers, professional triathletes and beginner endurance athletes are each placed in their appropriate groups.



4. **Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA)**

Surf Life Saving Australia was first founded in 1907, an umbrella organization that currently incorporates 305 local surf lifesaving clubs throughout Australia. These clubs are undoubtedly the epitome of open water swimming clubs where competitive swims are organized as part of the famously competitive, extremely popular, highly social and entertaining surf carnivals.

The clubs hold training sessions and teach nippers how to handle themselves - and others - in the ocean. The club tirelessly and passionately promotes all forms of open water athletic events in a social, enjoyable manner. Two examples - representative of what is available in Australia - include the Lorne Surf Life Saving Club and the Bondi Surf Bathers' Life Saving Club.

5. The **Lorne Surf Life Saving Club** hosts the nib Lorne Pier to Pub Swim and, as every Australian surf life saving club does, provides voluntary patrols of its coastline in summer so that swimmers and surfers can enjoy the ocean and surf safely.

6. The **Bondi Surf Bathers' Life Saving Club** is the oldest surf lifesaving club in the world and hosts the Bondi To Bronte Ocean Swim.

Open Water Swimming Clubs, Teams and Organizations



7. **Cabrillo Beach Polar Bears**

The Cabrillo Beach Polar Bears was started in 1953 by John Olguin and Jack Cheaney with the goals of health, physical fitness and community service.

The club has held formal and informal ocean training sessions, starting at 6:00 am and ending at dusk, near the Catalina Channel finish (on the California mainland) and a New Year's Day Swim for nearly 60 years.

The club annually selects a **King and Queen of the Beach** from its many daily ocean swimmers and has a convenient Cabrillo Beach Bathhouse as its official home only steps away from one of the coldest beaches in Southern California. The **King and Queen** represent the club at many community functions and are featured in the San Pedro Christmas Parade on the Polar Bear float.

8. The **Shadowcliffs Orcas** is an open water swimming club headquartered at the Shadow Cliffs Eastbay Regional Park near San Francisco. Members of the club must first pass an open water swimming test, but are then allowed to swim outside the designated swim area in the Shadow Cliffs Lake. As the club promotes, no lane lines, no chlorine, just sunshine and fresh air.

9. The **Jersey Long Distance Swimming Club** is a powerhouse in the world of open water swimming with numerous members who have completed channel swims and endurance swims all over the world. Its member includes those of all ages and abilities and it is affiliated with the Amateur Swimming Association Swim South East Region, British Long Distance Swimming Association, the Jersey Amateur Swimming Association and the Channel Swimming and Piloting Federation.



10. **Serpentine Swimming Club**

Open Water Swimming Clubs, Teams and Organizations

The Serpentine Swimming Club has own changing facilities and is allowed to swim in the Serpentine in Hyde Park in central London during certain morning hours. Its personable members swim year round and organize the annual Peter Pan Cup Christmas Morning Swim.

The water temperature in the Serpentine ranges from 0°C (32°F) to 21°C (70°F). Even when the lake is frozen, the swimmers break a hole in the ice for some ice swimming.

11. The **CIBBOWS (Coney Island Brighton Beach Open Water Swimmers)** is a non-profit group dedicated to being a community resource for open water swimmers of all levels. Members conduct regular group swims at Brighton Beach and Coney Island in New York from April to November and host the Grimaldo's Mile, the Aquarium 5K and 1 Mile, and the Veteran's Day 5K, 1 Mile and 2 Mile Swims.



12. **Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club**

The Dolphin Swimming and Boating Club was established in 1877, has rightly developed a proud tradition of safety, camaraderie and accomplishment over its long history. The iconic clubhouse is located near Fisherman's Wharf in full view of the majestic Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco Bay.

Like the other clubs on this list, it has many members who have conquered most of the most difficult channels around the world.

Members swim year-round in the waters of Aquatic Park where the water temperatures ranges between 10°C (50°F) to 15°C (61°F) year-round. A line of buoys parallel to the shore marks a quarter-mile course. After six months' membership in good standing, members may participate in the Club's organized swim program: approximately 20 swims inside and outside the cove throughout the year. Highlights of the Dolphin Club program include the Golden Gate and Alcatraz swims, twilight swims followed by potluck barbecues, and the Fort Point to Aquatic Park swim. If members swim at least 40 miles between December 21st and March 21st, they are honored as an official Dolphin Club Polar Bear.

Its members, photographed above by Susanne Friedrich, are welcoming and warm to everyone who takes a cool dip in San Francisco Bay.

13. The **Ocean City Swim Club** is an independent open water swim club based in Ocean City, New Jersey that holds a number of ocean training sessions, including popular weekend swims.

Open Water Swimming Clubs, Teams and Organizations

14. Members of the **New England Marathon Swimming Association** have been swimming in the waters of New England for 30 years from Booth Bay to Narragansett Bay and host a swim in Gloucester Harbor. The Association was formed to ensure open water swimming opportunities in New England's rivers, ponds, lakes, harbors, bays, sounds or ocean are available now and in the future.



15. **South End Rowing Club**

The South End Rowing Club was founded in 1873 and is adjacent to the Dolphin Club, located near Fisherman's Wharf in full view of the majestic Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco Bay. The club hosts the annual 1.25-mile Alcatraz Invitational Swim and a series of club swims, but its members train year-round in all conditions with only a swimsuit and a thermal cap. The camaraderie of the club is enticing and engaging. Like most clubs on this list, getting started is easy: just come down to the club and introduce yourself or help out at a club event.

16. The **Cape Long Distance Swimming Association** in South Africa has a number of cold-water training swims on Sunday mornings at Camps Bay beach as well as long-distance training sessions (5K or more) as well as a number of events and solo swims in and around the Cape Town area.



17. **L Street Brownies**

The L Street Brownies was officially organized as a club in 1902 with a history that has been traced to 1865. Members enjoy the L-Street Bathhouse as its headquarters. Members have been enjoying the cold waters of Boston Harbor for over 100 years and annually host the L Street New Year's Day Swim - a Boston tradition since 1904. Their club name comes from the beach where the club members meet and for the nut-brown skin color members develop from exposure to the sun.

Membership in the club costs US\$1 and averages between 35-50 swimmers throughout the year.

Open Water Swimming Clubs, Teams and Organizations

18. The **Cork Masters Swimming Club** in Ireland hosts training sessions, the Lee River Swim and The Edge Sports Sandycove Island Challenge jointly with the Cork Lions Club. Sandycove Island has become a popular training area for endurance athletes, channel swimmers and triathletes with an interest in open water swimming.

19. The **Half Moon Swimming Club** in Dublin, Ireland was founded in 1898 and has a history of success and enjoyment in the open water.

20. The **Colorado Masters Swimming Association** hosts open water swimming sessions at the Chatfield State Park in the Gravel Pond. There are also regular series swims in the middle of the Rocky Mountain at the Grant Ranch Swim Series and the Aquaman Series.

21. The **Nadadores** of South Florida host weekly Sunday ocean swims in Miami, aimed primarily at masters and adult open water swimmers.



22. Lucky's Lake Swimming

In central Florida's Lake Cane, the tireless promoter of open water swimming Dr. Lucky Meisenheimer is the lightning rod behind the global band of merry open water swimmers who regularly gather at his famously hospitable residence - home to the world's largest yo-yo collection - to enjoy open water training sessions, events, get-togethers and relays.

Besides promoting wellness and the enjoyment of open water swimming, Lucky has organized world record distance lake swims (solos), relays (up to 100K), 1K races and hosted thousands of swimmers and hundreds of lake swims at his daily swims in a well-marked 1K course.



23. Waikiki Swim Club

The Waikiki Swim Club has held weekly swims throughout Oahu including Saturday morning swims at Ala Moana Beach Park and Sunday morning swims at Kaimana Beach (on the Diamond Head side of Waikiki Beach) since 1971 as Hawaii's oldest organized club devoted to promoting safe and fun ocean swimming.

It hosts a number of ocean swims every year and sent teams to the Maui Channel Swim every

Open Water Swimming Clubs, Teams and Organizations

year since its inception. The club sponsors the North Shore Swim Series, the Christmas Biathlon, and the Valentine's Day Biathlon. Members include swimmers of a wide range of age and ability.

24. The private **Olympic Club**, America's oldest athletic club, was established in 1860 in San Francisco. Its 5,000+ active members are dedicated to the pursuit of amateur athletic excellence and include many Olympic heroes, accomplished athletes and world open water swimming champions. The Olympic Club hosts the popular **Trans Tahoe Relay** that is a high-altitude masters swimming relay from the state of Nevada to the state of California across Lake Tahoe.

25. **Open Water Chicago** exists to deliver adventures in fitness to both the local and global communities of open water swimming enthusiasts that centers its training swims in Lake Michigan on the shores of Chicago.



26. **Capo Masters**

The Capo Masters is located San Juan Capistrano, California and has been meeting in Laguna Beach and other beach locations throughout Orange County and Los Angeles County for over twenty years.

Its regular ocean swimming groups have as many as 30 swimmers at one time and are led by ocean aficionado and ultra-marathon swimmer Scott Zornig (photo on left).



27. **Coney Island Polar Bear Club**

Coney Island Polar Bear Club was established in 1903 and is the oldest American winter bathing organization. Its members swim in the Atlantic Ocean at Coney Island every Sunday from November to April. They have organized one of the most publicized Polar Bear Swims in the US for decades.

28. The **Avila Dolphins Swim Team** practices every Sunday year-round in Avila Beach, centrally located between Los Angeles and San Francisco on the Californian coast. In the water by 11 am, the team sometimes splits into 2-3 groups to accommodate the varying levels of skill,

Open Water Swimming Clubs, Teams and Organizations

expertise, enthusiasm and level of tolerance for the ocean conditions over the 1-2 mile course. The team members also travel to numerous races from Maui to San Francisco.

29. The **Triathlon Club of San Diego** has an ocean swim every Sunday at 8:00 am in Powerhouse Park in Del Mar, California. The Club is one of the oldest and largest triathlon clubs in the country with members primarily from San Diego and Southern Orange Counties, but also from Canada, Japan, and Australia. Members' experience level ranges from first timer to professional.



30. **Sea Monkeys**

The Sea Monkeys are located in Seal Beach, California whose members have a long and informal history in their friendly seaside community within easy view of Catalina Island and the Queen Mary harbored in neighboring Long Beach. Since the 1970's when famed Lynne Cox and Penny Dean trained from pier and jetty, swimmers from all over Southern California have flocked to the gentle shoreline of Seal Beach.

The Sea Monkeys regularly swim at 6 am on Thursdays from April to November. Wetsuits are optional, although most of the swimmers tend to be traditionalists.



31. **Mission Viejo Nadadores**

Regularly swim in south Orange County beaches in Southern California on the weekends.

Under the leadership of Siga Rose who has been teaching children and teenagers how to swim in the ocean since the 1970s, young swimmers learn how to feel comfortable in the ocean and

Open Water Swimming Clubs, Teams and Organizations

rough water and various subtle techniques and tactics to become successful competitive or solo open water swimmers.



32. Black-ice Open Water Swimming Club

The Black-ice Open Water Swimming Club is based in Black Rock, Australia (outside of Melbourne). They are one tough, dedicated group of open water swimmers. To become an official member of the Black Rock Icebergers (Black-Ice), a swimmer is required to complete a 3K circuit of the long course at Brighton Baths during winter when the water temperature must be at or below 10°C (50°F) under the following rules:

- Definitely no wetsuits, and
- No neoprene swim caps.

The Black Rock Icebergers include English Channel swimmers, Cook Strait swimmers, Rottneest Channel swimmers, and others who simply are looking for a challenge.

The Black Rock Icebergers train every Saturday morning throughout the year at the Brighton Sea Baths, including winter when the air temperature ranges from 6°C to 15°C (42°F to 59°F).

Anyone can join in the Saturday practices, but as founder (and a 2003 English Channel swimmer) Albert (Alby) Bardoel asks, "*Remember our club rules - NO WETSUITS – because would you climb Mt Everest in a helicopter? Would you ride the Tour de France on a motorbike? Would you sail the world in a motorboat? Or would you run a marathon in your car?*"

These are a few examples of hundreds (if not thousands) of other open water swimming clubs around the world.

Enjoy their fellowship and camaraderie wherever you travel.

Four Fundamental Feeding Steps in Open Water Competitions

The standard four-step feeding process in order to feed quickly includes the following:

1. **Seek and Spot**
2. **Reach and Roll**
3. **Gulp and Go**
4. **Toss and Turn**

Photos below are of the female swimmers during the 25K race at the 2007 World Swimming Championships (photos by Dr. Jim Miller).



1. **Seek and Spot** - as the swimmer approaches the feeding pontoon or escort boat, they lift their head to spot their coach and seek out exactly where they must go, taking into account surface chop, swells and their relative position in the water versus the escort boat or feeding station.



2. **Reach and Roll** - as the swimmer approaches the coach, he/she reaches up to grab their cup or bottle, from a feeding stick or other means, as they roll over on their back or side. They resist the temptation to go vertical, to tread water, to eggbeater, to relax or to look forward towards the horizon. Instead as they roll over on their back, they continue their kick.



3. **Gulp and Go** - they firmly grab the cup, tilting the lip of the cup or bottle within their open mouth, and then gulp.

Four Fundamental Feeding Steps in Open Water Competitions

As long as a majority of the contents of the cup are consumed, the feeding is deemed successful.



4. **Toss and Turn** - after the contents of the cup or bottle are consumed, the swimmer immediately tosses the cup and turns to go.

The swimmers assume that the cup will be picked up by their coach or volunteers at the race or on the escort boat.

Once this skill is practiced and the timing with the swimmer's coach is perfected, the process often takes no more than 2-3 seconds from the time the athlete reaches for the cup and he/she is back on their way.



In the **Reach and Roll** phase, it is important to grab the cup so the swimmer's palm of their hand covers the top of the cup, especially when there is surface chop or ocean swells.

The hand on top often prevents the contents of the cup from spilling (too much).

In the **Gulp and Go** phase, the swimmer can also consume an aspirin, piece of chocolate, banana or gel that is pre-mixed inside their drink, so they are simultaneously consuming both solids and liquids - thereby, saving time and eliminating the need to use two hands and going vertical (see top photo above).

The Socratic Method in the Open Water



Socratic Method is named after the Classical Greek philosopher Socrates where individuals can learn and be taught based on asking and answering questions to stimulate rational thinking and to illuminate ideas.

The same form of education can be utilized by open water swimming coaches and athletes.

An open water swimming coach should be inquisitive - not instructive - after a race. By asking a lot of questions, coaches can enable their athletes to internalize and understand what they did in a race - both good and bad. By encouraging the athlete – of any age or level – to visualize who they were swimming with, what their pace was, how did they feel, the shape of the pack, their positioning during the race, the athlete will eventually become a more seasoned performer.

Open water coaches who question their athletes before and after a race help the athlete understand what can and should be done because each athlete is out there in the open water by themselves. Every decision they make in competitive situations – at the start, at the turn buoys, setting up the finish and during the final sprint – has a direct impact on their placing. And these decisions must be made quickly. Therefore, coaches can assist their athletes by constantly questioning them and pushing them to come up with the right answers for themselves in innumerable situations.

Before the race, coaches can ask...

1. Will you use Vaseline® or lanolin?
2. How many pairs of goggles are you taking to the race?
3. Who is your competition?
4. What is your goal?
5. How did you do last year? Where you satisfied?

After the race, coaches can ask about the start...

1. Where were you at the start?
2. Who was next to you?
3. Did you choose that position?
4. What was the pace at the start?
5. How did you feel until the first turn buoy?

Regarding the middle of the race, coaches can ask...

1. Where were you in the middle of the race?
2. Did you purposefully go to this position?
3. Where you boxed-in at any point?
4. When did the pace pick up?

The Socratic Method in the Open Water

5. Who was swimming in front of you?
6. Who was swimming behind you and to your left and right?
7. Are these swimmers faster than you?
8. What was your stroke tempo?

Regarding the turns, coaches can ask...

1. Did you speed up before or after the turn buoys?
2. Did you have the inside position around the turn buoys?
3. Did you get hit?
4. How can you avoid getting hit around the turns?
5. What was your position going into the turns?
6. How did you actually make the turn?

Regarding navigation, coaches can ask...

1. Did you know where you were going at all times?
2. Was it hard to see anything?
3. Did you take a good line to the finish?
4. Did you feel any ocean swells out there?
5. How often were you lifting your head to sight?
6. Did you see the lead kayak?
7. What sides were you breathing on?

Regarding the finish, coaches can ask...

1. When did the sprint begin?
2. Did you catch up to anyone once the sprint began?
3. Were you using your legs the whole time?
4. Was there any physical contact coming into the finish?
5. Were you satisfied with your finish?
6. How can we train better for a better finish?

While it is not exactly the Socratic method as known in the academic world, the idea is to help the athlete improve and understand the myriad situations that happen in the open water.

Ocean's Seven – Scaling the Heights of Open Water



The Seven Summits are the highest mountains in each of the seven continents.

Successfully scaling these mountains is a mountaineering challenge attained by only the strongest. As of 2007, 198 climbers have achieved this expensive and physically demanding goal.

Open water swimming's version of the Seven Summits is the Ocean's Seven:

1. Irish Channel between Ireland and Scotland,
2. Cook Strait between the North and South Islands of New Zealand,
3. Molokai Channel between Oahu and Molokai Islands in Hawaii,
4. English Channel between England and France,
5. Catalina Channel in Southern California,
6. Tsugaru Channel between the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido in Japan, and
7. Strait of Gibraltar between Europe and Africa.

No human has yet to complete the Ocean's Seven.

Achieving the Ocean's Seven requires an ability to swim in both very cold and very warm seas. It also demands the swimmer is physically and mentally prepared to overcome every condition known to defeat open water swimmers, from strong currents to stiff winds.

Like its mountaineering cousin, the Ocean's Seven requires a tremendous amount of planning, time, financial resources and multi-national support teams of knowledgeable local experts.

A description of the Ocean's Seven follows. Note the distances listed are the shortest straight-line distances from point-to-point, but the actual distance covered by swimmers is significantly greater due to the tidal movements and currents.

1. Irish (North) Channel

- Location: Channel between Ireland and Scotland.
- Reasons for Difficulty: Heavy seas, cold water, thunderstorms and strong currents are among the natural elements that must be overcome in the 33.7K (21 miles) channel.
- Window of Opportunity: July through September.

Ocean's Seven – Scaling the Heights of Open Water

- Hazards: Considered to be the most difficult channel swim in the world with the water temperature 54°F (12°C), normally overcast days, and tremendous difficulty in accurately predicting weather and water conditions. Swimmers face large pods of jellyfish if conditions are calm.
- Description: Has been attempted at least 73 times since 1924, but only 8 successful solo swims and 5 relays have been achieved to date. Most of the attempts have been abandoned due to difficult conditions and hypothermia.
- Additional Information: Swim crossings are governed by the rules set by the Irish Long Distance Swimming Association. First attempt was made in 1924 and the first success was 1947.
- www.bangorboat.com/page6.html

2. Cook Strait

- Location: Channel between the North and South Islands of New Zealand.
- Reasons for Difficulty: 16 nautical miles (26K) across immense tidal flows in icy water conditions among jellyfish and sharks are extremely stiff challenges for only the most capable and adventurous swimmers.
- Window of Opportunity: November through May.
- Hazards: 1 in 6 swimmers encounter sharks on their crossings. Sharks only come around to be nosy. No one has ever been attached during a swim. Both sides of the strait have rock cliffs. Cold water (14°C-19°C or 57°C-66°F) over 26 kilometers and heavy chop.
- Additional Information: To date, only 71 successful crossings have been made by 61 individuals from 8 countries. Hypothermia and change in weather conditions during a race are the most common reasons attempts fail.
- www.cookstraitswim.org.nz/

3. Molokai Channel (or the Kaiwi Channel)

- Location: Channel between the western coast of Molokai Island and the eastern coast of Oahu in Hawaii.
- Reasons for Difficulty: 26 miles (41.8K) across a deep-water (701 meters) channel with extraordinarily strong currents in the middle of the Pacific Ocean and aggressive marine life.
- Window of Opportunity: As conditions permit.
- Hazards: Extremely large rolling swells, strong winds and tropical heat and very warm salty water offset the incredibly beautiful views of the Hawaiian Islands and deep-blue underwater scenery.
- Additional Information: Deep-water channel with beautiful views of the Hawaiian Islands was first crossed in 1961 by Keo Nakama in 15 hours and 30 minutes and has only been crossed by 8 individuals to date.
- <http://www.hawaiiswim.org/hawaiianChannel/kaiwiChannel.html>
-

Ocean's Seven – Scaling the Heights of Open Water

4. English Channel (Channel Swimming or Channel Swimming Association)

- Location: Channel between England and France with the narrowest point being in the Strait of Dover between Shakespeare Beach, Dover, England and Calais, France.
- Reasons for Difficulty: An international waterway of 34K (21 miles) at its narrowest point, cold water temperatures, strong currents and ever-shifting water and weather conditions.
- Window of Opportunity: June to September.
- Hazards: The world's most famous channel crossing with nearly 1,000 successful swimmers to date, but thousands of failed attempts due to strong currents and tidal flows, strong winds and whitecaps caused by changing conditions and hypothermia.
- Additional Information: Considered to be the standard for channel crossing with the rules and traditions significantly influencing the worldwide open water swimming community.
- www.channelswimmingassociation.com and www.channelswimming.net

5. Catalina Channel

- Location: Channel between Santa Catalina Island and Los Angeles, California, U.S.A.
- Reasons for Difficulty: Cold water (especially near coast), strong currents, potential for strong winds, marine life and distance. Shortest point-to-point course is 33.7K (21 miles) from Emerald Bay on Santa Catalina Island to the San Pedro Peninsula.
- Window of Opportunity: June to September.
- Hazards: A deep-water channel that is comparable to the English Channel in terms of water conditions, difficulty, distance and the physical and mental challenges to the swimmer, although the water temperature is a bit warmer (mid-60°F water). Marine life seen on occasion, including migrating whales and large pods of dolphins.
- Additional Information: First successful swim was in January, 1927 when Canadian George Young won \$25,000 in the Wrigley Ocean Marathon Swim in 15 hours and 44 minutes.
- www.swimcatalina.org

6. Tsugaru Channel

- Location: Deep-water channel between Honshu, the main island of Japan where Tokyo is located, and Hokkaido, the northernmost island of Japan. Closest points are Tappi Misaki in Honshu and Shirakami Misaki in Hokkaido.
- Reasons for Difficulty: An international waterway, 19.5K (12 miles) at its narrowest point. Swimmers must cross an extremely strong current between the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean, large swells and abundant marine life ranging from sharks to deadly sea snakes. English and other western languages are not spoken in area. Water can be between 62 – 68°F (16 – 20°C).
- Window of Opportunity: July and August.
- Hazards: Swimmers are swept long distances due to the extraordinarily strong currents flowing from the Sea of Japan to the Pacific Ocean. Swimmers face large blooms of squid during the night. Swimmers are challenged by occasional patches of cold water that

Ocean's Seven – Scaling the Heights of Open Water

flow up from the depths and are caused by the screws of the large oil tankers from the Middle East travel through to the West Coast of the U.S.

- Additional Information: Only four confirmed solo crossings and one confirmed double-crossing have been achieved to date.
- www.tsugaruchannelswimming.com

7. Strait of Gibraltar

- Location: Strait between Spain and Morocco that connects the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea. Shortest point is between Punta Oliveros in Spain and Punta Ciros in Morocco.
- Reasons for Difficulty: 14.4K (8 miles) across an eastern flow of water from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mediterranean Sea with an average of 3 knots (5.5 km per hour). Heavy boat traffic, logistical barriers and surface chop confront swimmers throughout each attempt.
- Window of Opportunity: June to October.
- Hazards: Its boundaries were known in antiquity as the Pillars of Hercules. The currents remain of Herculean strength. Combined with the unpredictability of the water conditions and high winds, only 185 successful one-way crossings and 7 double-crossings have been made to date.
- Additional Information: Most attempts are made from Tarifa Island due to the influence of strong currents, a distance of 18.5 – 22K (10 – 12 miles).
- www.acneg.com

Who will be the first to achieve the Ocean's Seven? Who will be the first to try? The Seven Second Summits is another mountaineering term that refers to the second-highest peak of each continent.

What swims might be included in the Ocean's Second Seven, open water swimming equivalent of the Seven Seven Summits?

A very small number of candidate swims might include the Straits of Magellan in Chile, Skagerrak Strait between Norway, Sweden and Denmark, Cape Point and Cape of Good Hope both in South Africa, Lake Baikal in Russia, Beagle Channel between Argentina and Chile, Lake Titicaca from Bolivia to Peru, Gulf of Aqaba (or Eilat) between Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, Rottneest Channel in Australia, circumnavigation of Yonaguni Island in Okinawa near Taiwan, Loch Ness in Scotland, circumnavigation of Isle of Wight or the Jersey Island, Lake Tahoe between Nevada and California, U.S.A., Capri to Napoli in Italy, Majorca to Minorca, Spanish Balearic Islands, one of the crossings in the Santa Barbara Channel in California, U.S.A., crossing of the Five Lakes of Mount Fuji in Japan, Lake Balaton in Hungary or Lac St-Jean in Quebec, Canada, Jebel to Latakia in Syria, circumnavigation of Manhattan Island in New York City, U.S.A., or the Gulf of Toroneos in Greece...although there are innumerable other swims to be discussed, proposed and attempted, but there are many others.

Note: The Ocean's Seven is not linguistically correct as the swims do not cross oceans but channels.

Fears of the Open Water

In a 2009 online poll, 208 swimmers expressed their greatest fears of the open water.

Despite the masses that are entering the open bodies of water around the world, fear still plays a factor in the minds of many. Here is what scares some people:

- Sharks - 39% of total votes casted
- Jellyfish/stingrays - 27%
- Pollution - 24%
- Things that cannot be seen - 21%
- Cold water - 18%
- Waves/currents/tides - 17%
- Going off-course - 12%
- Not finishing - 12%
- Marine life other than sharks/jellyfish/stingrays - 11%
- Nothing - 9%
- Goggles coming off - 8%
- Other - 7%
- Physical contact by competitors - 7%
- Not seeing the bottom - 4%
- Seaweed/kelp - 4%
- Everything - 2%
- Vaseline/lanolin getting on goggles - 1%

You have to respect those athletes who said, "Nothing."

Shelley Taylor-Smith, a seven-time world professional champion and fearless solo marathon swimming adventurer, was one of those intrepid swimmers. "Absolutely nothing I fear," which was understandable because she swam frequently in the company of sharks and was the first person to swim in a bikini in world swimming championship event. Why?



Motivational Keynote Speaker, Success & Performance Coach, International Bestselling Author and Champion Mindset® Business Trainer, Shelley Taylor-Smith is an ordinary Australian who achieved extraordinary results.

"I wore this bikini suit because of the jellyfish that were everywhere [in Perth's Swan River]. I wanted to be able to let them out [of my suit] ...or get them out with easy access and not disturb my mental focus and mindset which they are renowned for doing," recalled Shelley with a smile.

"I won the race and gritted my teeth as I got stung."

50 Great Open Water Locations in the Americas



Great places to conduct open water races or do training sessions are located all over the world. The number of seashores, ocean fronts, islands, lakes, bays, river, fjords, canals, estuaries, bays and lagoons located on every continent and in every country is literally innumerable.

As a small sampling of the amazing number of great global open water swimming locations, the Outdoor Swimming Society has done a remarkable job in documenting and posting these open water swimming venues throughout **Great Britain**.

A list of 50 outstanding open water swimming locations in the Americas - in no particular order - is listed below. This admittedly subjective list is based on three primary criteria: natural beauty, the year-round presence of open water swimmers and the camaraderie of the local swimming community.

1. **Atlantic City, New Jersey, USA:** coastal location of innumerable races



2. **Lake Travis** near Austin, Texas, USA: one of the marvelous lakes among rolling hills of Texas where the open water swimming and triathlon communities come together for year-round practice sessions, clinics, long-distance relays, community events and competitive races, including high school and collegiate championships, that are sponsored and organized by the American Swimming Association

3. **Waikiki Beach**, Hawaii, USA: pleasantly calm tropical beach on the island of Oahu

4. **Ala Moana Beach**, Hawaii, USA: protected flat-water swimming beach on Oahu

5. **Lake Cane**, Orlando, Florida, USA: popular lake in central Florida

6. **Brighton Beach**, New York, USA: a coastal community on Coney Island in Brooklyn, New York City

7. **Aquatic Park**, San Francisco Bay, California, USA: protected cold-water popular swimming area near Alcatraz Island and Fisherman's Wharf

50 Great Open Water Locations in the Americas



8. **Santa Monica Beach** in Santa Monica, California, USA: a conveniently located beach with Tower 26 as its focal point for triathletes, open water swimmers and fitness enthusiasts in the Los Angeles area. Groups, small and large, organized and informal, competitive and low-key, young and old, train for triathlons and ocean swims along the wide expanse of sand that offers currents, waves and surface chop on most afternoons.

9. **Acapulco**, Mexico: old coastal tourist destination in an exotic locale

10. **Bermuda**: popular tourist destination in the Atlantic Ocean warmed by the Gulf Stream



11. **La Jolla Cove**, California, USA: small beach within the San Diego-La Jolla Underwater Park, a marine refuge area where a passionate community of open water swimmers, channel swimmers, adventure swimmers of every age, ability and background gather year-round. Competitive events have been conducted since 1916 including several events sponsored and organized by the La Jolla Cove Swim Club.

12. **Cancun**, Mexico: site of warm, tropical water in the Caribbean Sea and a number of high-caliber amateur and professional swims

13. **Lake Zirahuén** in Michoacán, Mexico: a beautiful lake to prepare for cold-water and channel swims where motor craft is restricted

14. **Las Estacas**, Mexico: a river in Morelos where warm water comes from volcanoes, 90 minutes from Mexico City

15. **La Paz** in Mexico: a beautiful location at the end of Baja California with abundant marine life

50 Great Open Water Locations in the Americas

16. **Oak Street Beach**, Lake Michigan, USA: convenient urban beach in Chicago, Illinois
17. **Washington Avenue Beach** in Lake Superior in Bayfield, Wisconsin, USA: swim around and to Madeline Island in the beautiful and mighty Lake Superior
18. **Panajachel** in Lake Atitlan, Guatemala: a deep lake in the Guatemalan Highlands surrounded by three volcanoes
19. **Torch Lake**, Michigan, USA: described as the third most beautiful lake in the world by Natural Geographic (see on first page)
20. **Waldo Lake**, Lane County, Oregon, USA: a wilderness lake, scooped out by ancient glaciers, that is one of the purest in the world where you can see to depths of 30 meters.
21. **Lake Memphremagog** between Vermont, USA and Quebec, Canada: site of professional and amateur swims in a lake where the local community is extremely supportive
22. **Miami**, Florida, USA: swim in the warm southern Florida waters with the Miami skyline as a backdrop in a picturesque tropically urban setting
23. **Hammonasset State Park** in Madison, Connecticut, USA: two miles of safe shoreline swimming in northeast America
24. **Long Island Sound** in Connecticut, USA: an estuary of the Atlantic Ocean between Connecticut to the north and Long Island, New York to the south that has produced a large number of English Channel swimmers



25. **Manhattan**, New York City, USA: while not open to training, races around Manhattan Island produced by the NYC Swim, provides unbeatable views of municipal swims and challenging currents and tides to deal with. However, the safety considerations and on-the-water safety personnel provided by the NYC Swim organizers make each race a memorable experience. Events range from short cross-river swims to the famous 28.5-mile Manhattan Island Marathon Swim.
26. **Mirror Lake**, upstate New York, USA: one of two lakes in Lake Placid, located in a small-town destination area with cable swimming

50 Great Open Water Locations in the Americas

27. **Sky Lakes (Minnewaska, Awosting, Mohonk)** in the Shawangunk Mountains, New York, USA: aqua colored mountain lakes with spectacular scenery during all seasons especially with fall foliage in breathtaking cold water.

28. **Cape Eleuthera** in the Bahamas: isolated and spartan beach with abundant marine life with wide rolling pink sand beaches to large outcrops of ancient coral reefs.



29. **Lake Willoughby** in Vermont, USA: a beautiful glacier lake with races organized by the passionate Northeast Kingdom Open Water Swimming Association. One of a number of lovely lakes in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont where the clarity and tranquility of the lakes rival any others in North America. The geological aquatic marvels are the venues for a number of triathlons and open water swims from 1-10 miles.

30. **Rosario** in Argentina: site of the world-renowned marathon where the swimmers are treated like stars.

31. **Lac Megantic** in Quebec, Canada: beautiful nature augmented by a supportive local community.

32. **Hanauma Bay** on Oahu in Hawaii, USA: a protected marine life conservation cove and underwater park with abundant marine life and a large coral reef and a bay floor is the crater of an ancient volcano.

33. **Makapuu** near Rabbit Island on Oahu in Hawaii, USA: popular bodysurfing beach with large waves and riptides can make swimming challenging at best and hazardous at worst.

34. **North Shore** of Oahu in Hawaii, USA: gorgeously famous stretch of surfing beaches with high surf and impossible riptides in winter becomes a wonderfully calm showcase for ocean swimming in summer.

35. **Harrington Sound** in Bermuda: each swim is breathtaking with underwater scenery that is

50 Great Open Water Locations in the Americas

continuously enthralling



36. **Catalina Channel** off the coast of Southern California, USA: on a calm, windless, clear, full-moon night, the bioluminescence is a marvel to behold. Part of the **Triple Crown of Open Water Swimming**, the channel presents a 21-mile challenge between Catalina Island and the Southern California mainland with marine wildlife that includes whales and dolphins.

37. **Twelvemile Beach** in the Upper Peninsula on Lake Superior in Michigan, USA: an example of thousands of lakes in the upper Midwest.

38. **Seven Mile Beach on Grand Cayman Island** in the Cayman Islands: beautiful stretch of tropical beaches with clear water.

39. **El Arco de Cabo San Lucas** in Mexico: distinctive rock formation at the tip of Cabo San Lucas at the southern end of Mexico's Baja California Peninsula



40. **Percé Rock** in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Quebec, Canada: one of the largest natural arches in the world that rises sheer from the near the village of Percé.

41. **Maracas Bay** in Trinidad & Tobago: popular swimming beach 30 minutes from the Port of Spain with a long history of ocean swims and strong local support.

42. **Lake Ontario**: a supportive community of swimmers enjoys the cooler waters of the great Lake Ontario's Canadian side.

43. **Varadero Beach** in Cuba: offering the brightest blue waters in the Northern Hemisphere.

44. **Maui Channel** in Hawaii, USA: swimming year-round on the Maui Island side is calm and peaceful, but in early September, the channel becomes alive with hundreds of swimmers enjoying the often tranquil, but sometimes rough, deep-water channel.

50 Great Open Water Locations in the Americas

45. **Lake Tahoe** bordering the states of California and Nevada, USA: crisp, clear lake comes alive in the summer when hundreds of swimmers participate in solo and relay swims

46. **Valparaíso** in Chile: an urban seaport with a local ocean swimming community.

47. **Vancouver** in British Columbia, Canada: a vibrant open water swimming community with a number of swims and events in the city by the sea.

48. **Ketchikan** in Alaska, USA: a quiet, isolated, rugged stretch in the northern Pacific that has drawn swimmers from all over the world.

49. **Santa Barbara** in California, USA: channel swimming, weekend swims, ocean swims are all strongly supported by a passionate, friendly group of swimmers.

50. **St. Croix** in the U.S. Virgin Islands: swimmers come from all over the Americas to swim within the largest island barrier reef system in the Caribbean

Where Are Open Water Races Conducted?



With 70% of the Earth's surface covered in water, open water swimmers have a vast choice of where they swim. The world's waterways range from warm to cold, salt to fresh, calm to rough, manmade to natural.

The World Open Water Swimming Association analyzed 1,423 open water swims in 79 countries throughout Asia, Europe, Oceania, the Americas and Africa and found the following data about where open water swims are held:

Ocean or sea:	58.6% of total
Lake:	23.2%
River:	7.8%
Bay:	7.6%
Dam or reservoir:	1.7%
Canal:	0.9%
Fjord:	0.1%

Photo of Acapulco Bay which sits on the Pacific Ocean on the western Mexican coast.

International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame

From Captain Matthew Webb who first crossed the English Channel in 1875 to Lynne Cox who was the first person to swim in Antarctica, open water swimming has always attracted heroic and risk-taking adventurers. Many, but not all, of these adventurers, champions and record-holders have been inducted in the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame (IMSHOF).

The IMSHOF was founded in 1961 by the Professional Marathon Swimmers Association to recognize the accomplished marathon swimmers.

Under the direction of Buck Dawson, the International Swimming Hall of Fame (ISHOF) founder and executive director, the IMSHOF began its affiliation with the ISHOF.

Currently, the IMSHOF is administered by Dale Petranec and a 29-member international selection committee.

1. Shelley Taylor-Smith of Australia, the dominant female professional marathon swimmer from the mid-1980's to the mid-1990's
2. Sid Cassidy of Florida, former chairman of the FINA Technical Open Water Swimming Committee and former pro marathon swimmer
3. Tim Johnson of Massachusetts, author of *The History of Open Water Swimming* and the world's foremost authority on tidal influences on open water swimmers
4. Paul Asmuth of California, the dominant professional marathon swimmer of the 1980's
5. Michael Read of England, 1960 Olympic Games swimmer and Chairman of the Channel Swimming Association
6. Conrad Wennerberg of Illinois, Chairman Emeritus of the IMSHOF and author of *Winds, Waves and Sunburn: A Brief History of Marathon Swimming*, one of the most authoritative books written on marathon swimming
7. Steven Munatones of California, creator of *The Daily News of Open Water Swimming*
8. Alison Streeter of the U.K., Queen of the Channel for her 43 successful swims of the English Channel
9. Kevin Murphy of the U.K., King of the Channel for his 34 successful swims of the English Channel
10. Pierre Otis of Canada, former Chairman of the Traversée internationale du lac St-Jean
11. Dale Petranec of New Jersey, Honorary Secretary of the FINA Technical Open Water Swimming Committee and IMSHOF (shown above)
12. Carol Sing of California, oldest female swimmer to cross the English Channel
13. Montserrat Tresserras of Spain, first Spaniard to swim the Straits of Gibraltar and English Channel and first female swimmer to swim the English Channel both ways (1961)
14. Irene van der Laan of the Netherlands, former English Channel double-crossing record holder and long-time professional marathon swimmer
15. Lynn Blouin of Canada, race director of the Traversée internationale du Lac Memphrémagag and Vice President of the IMSHOF.
16. Richard Broer of the Netherlands, creator of Netherlands Open Water
17. David Clark of California, a swimmer of, and coach, escort and observer for swimmers of the Catalina Channel and English Channel
18. Bob Duenkel of Florida, the Curator and Assistant CEO of the ISHOF
19. Silvia Dalotto of Argentina, a certified FINA Open Water official, advocate of South

International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame

American open water swimmers and former top professional marathon swimmer

20. James Doty of Massachusetts, a former professional marathon swimmer and founder of the New England Marathon Swimming Association

21. Maurice Ferguson of the U.K., former president of the British Long Distance Swimming Association

22. Dr. Marcella MacDonald of Connecticut, successfully completed 6 English Channel crossings including a double-crossing

23. Dr. Osama Ahmed Momtaz of Egypt, recipient of the National Award of Excellency in Sport from the Egyptian Government and Director of the Egyptian Swimming Federation

24. Christopher Guesdon of Australia, open water swimming administrator, coach, athlete, promoter and FINA administrator

25. Dee Llewellyn of Great Britain, British Long Distance Swimming Association administrator

26. Pavel Kuznetsov of Russia, English Channel swimmer, coach and open water swimming administrator

27. Neville Smith of South Africa, South African open water swimming coach, promoter, administrator and commentator

28. Jay Thomas of Florida, FINA and USA Swimming open water swimming official and administrator

29. Peter Van Vooren of Belgium, Chairman of the Channel Swimming Association

The IMSHOF not only attempts to recognize the efforts of the most accomplished swimmers who participate in competitive events, but also recognizes the efforts of solo swimmers, where the swimmer battles the elements and uncharted waters.

Its objectives are as follows:

1. to nominate and select outstanding marathon swimmers and officials who make the sport possible
2. to establish and maintain a biography on the swimmers selected as IMSHOF honorees
3. to accept nominations and award The Irving Davids/Captain Roger Wheeler Memorial Award established in 1970 by the New England Marathon Swimming Association on behalf of the ISHOF which honors the contribution of individuals who make major contributions to marathon swimming
4. to nominate, select and award a IMSHOF Certificate of Merit to swimmers and organizations who make major contributions to marathon swimming
5. to accept official records for the ISHOF Henning Library and memorabilia for the ISHOF Museum
6. to serve as resource and provide expertise to the ISHOF committees on matters related to open water swimming and marathon swimming
7. to record marathon swims that are observed, but are not conducted under the jurisdiction of an official or sanctioning body. The role is to record, for historical purposes, the conditions and methods used by and reported by the swimmer.

Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in the Open Water



They are photogenic. They are incredibly physically fit. They smile brightly and wave enthusiastically to the crowds before and after their races. They hug each other after their races are over. They give great interviews with thoughtful answers.

So nice. So gracious. So accommodating. So admirable. Modern goddesses of the high seas.

But when the gun goes off in world-class open water swims, a dramatic change occurs. Adrenaline kicks in. Competitive juices start to flow. Intensity skyrockets.

When the race begins, the female marathon swimmers shed every veneer of innocence and turn into the ultimate athletic warriors. Their competitive spirit would make any NFL head coach, boxing trainer or boot camp sergeant proud.

If the world's media can capture these athletes and their intensity on TV, in photos and in print, the sport will continue its growth and increase its popularity.

That being said, the sport may be wise to immediately clean up the unsportsmanlike tactics currently being employed more and more often by overly ambitious and unscrupulous athletes. For example, at a FINA Marathon Swimming World Cup race in 2008, Micha Burden (shown above) was kicked so hard that her rib was fractured and her lung was bruised.

Similarly, Chip Peterson of North Carolina was purposefully impeded twice by a double pull-back during the final sprint to the finish. Unlike Micha, Chip sustained no injuries, but the end result was the same: a top swimmer was knocked out of medal contention through the unsportsmanlike actions of their competitors.

Fortunately, both athletes recovered and will face their adversaries in the London Olympics quadrennial.

Micha and Chip, like their competitors, will go up to the starting line with a smile...with the hopes it ends with a victory smile.

New Open Water Swims Around The World

- New Event:** **Olympic 10K Marathon Swim**
Location: Serpentine Lake, Hyde Park in central London
Date: August 9, 2012 (Day 13) for women
August 10, 2012 (Day 14) for men
Qualification: Top 25 athletes who qualify in a two-step process: at the 2011 World Swimming Championships 10K race in Shanghai, China and a second qualification race in 2012
Update: An estimated crowd of up to 250,000 spectators are expected for both the male and female races in central London.
Website: Latest information is posted at www.london2012.com
- New Event:** **Olympic 10K Marathon Swim**
Location: Copacabana Beach, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
Date: 2016
Qualification: Top athletes in a process to be determined.
Update: An estimated crowd of up to 300,000 spectators are expected at both the male and female races at one of the world's most famous beaches.
Website: Latest information is posted at www.rio2016.org.br/en/
- New Event:** **2011 World University Games (Universiade 2011 Shenzhen)**
Location: Shenzhen Bay, China (just north of Hong Kong)
Date: July 2011
Distance: 10K
Opportunity: Represent your country in an international competition against university students
Qualification: Based on each country's qualification standards
Website: Latest information at www.sz2011.org/eng
- New Event:** **Special Olympics 2011 World Summer Games**
Location: City of Marathon, Greece (just south of Greece)
Date: July 2011
Distance: 1.5K
Opportunity: Represent your country in an international quadrennial competition
Qualification: Based on each country's qualification standards
Update: 43 athletes from are entered from Australia, Bahamas, Barbados, Cayman Islands, El Salvador, Gibraltar, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malta, Korea, Netherlands, Puerto Rico, Singapore and South Africa
Latest information at www.athens2011.org/en
- New Event:** **U.S. Masters Swimming H2Open Series**
Series: Jim McDonnell Lake in Reston, Virginia on May 29 – 30
Lake Berryessa in California on June 12
Big Shoulders, Chicago, Illinois on September 11
Tropical Splash in Sarasota, Florida on October 2
Opportunity: Compete in a collegially competitive open water swimming series
Qualification: Open to all U.S. Masters Swimming registered athletes

New Open Water Swims Around The World

- Update: **Latest information at www.usms.org**
- New Event: **Great Lakes Open Water Swim (GLOWS) Series**
 Location: **July 11: Search for Monongy in Allegheny River, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
 July 17: USMS 10K Open Water National Championships, Noblesville, IN
 July 24: O*H*I*O* Masters Lake Erie Open Water Swim in Cleveland, Ohio
 August 7: Big Red Lighthouse Swim in Holland, Michigan on
 August 14: Ohio River Open Water Swim in Prospect, Kentucky
 August 21: Madison Open Water Swim in Lake Monoma, Madison, WI
 September 11: Big Shoulders in Lake Michigan, Chicago, Illinois**
- Qualification: **Open to U.S. Masters Swimming registered athletes**
 Update: **Latest information at www.greatlakeszone.com**
- New Event: **Florida Open Water Championship Series**
 Location: **April 17: Nike Swim Miami in Miami, Florida
 May 1: Lake Weir Swim in Ocklawaha, Florida
 May 8: Hurricane Man in St. Pete Beach, Florida
 May 29: Tri This in Clearwater, Florida
 June 12: Swim Around Key West in Key West, Florida
 June 12 – 13: Open Water Festival in Ft. Myers Beach, Florida
 June 19: Tri This in Clearwater, Florida
 July 17: Tri This in Clearwater, Florida
 October 2: Dixie Zone Open Water Championships in Sarasota, Florida**
- Qualification: **Open to U.S. Masters Swimming registered athletes**
 Update: **Latest information at www.floridaopenwater.org**
- New Event: **Slam The Dam**
 Location: **Lake Mead National Recreational Area, Nevada (near Las Vegas)**
 Date: **October 2**
 Distance: **8K, 1.2 miles and 2.4 miles**
 Update: **Athletes can also enter the Grand Slam (8K + 1.2-mile races) or the Super Slam (1.2-mile + 2.4-mile races)**
 Website: **Latest information is posted at www.slamthedam.com**
- New Event: **Byron Swim Festival**
 Location: **Hellespont from Asia to Europe, starting in Turkey**
 Date: **May 3**
 Distance: **5K**
 Update: **Channel was first crossed in 1810 by Lord Byron**
 Website: **Latest information is posted at www.swimhellespont.com/byron-swim-festival/**
- New Event: **Thingvallasund (Pingvallasund)**
 Location: **Lake Thingvellir (Lake Pingvallasund), Lake National Park in Iceland**
 Date: **July 16**
 Distance: **5K**

New Open Water Swims Around The World

- Update: Starts at midnight in 11° water (52°F)
 Website: Latest information is posted at www.thingvallasund.com
- New Event: **Africa Ice Swim**
 Location: New Dam, Fraserburg, South Africa (5 hours from Cape Town)
 Date: July 16 – 17
 Distance: 0.6K (for the Endurance Swim) and Mile Swim
 Update: Water will be below 5°C (41°F) at 4,593-foot (1,400-meter) altitude
 Website: Request information from Craig Doonan at info@leapcommunications.co.za
- New Event: **Asian Beach Games**
 Location: Muscat, Oman
 Date: December 8 – 16
 Distance: 5K and 10K
 Update: Competitors from 45 countries will attend based on their country's qualification standards
 Website: www.muscat2010.org.om/
- New Event: **South American Beach Games**
 Location: Montevideo, Uruguay
 Date: December
 Distance: 5K and 10K
 Website: www.uruguay2009.com/
- New Event: **Nokia Outdoor Series**
 Location: Thames River, England
 Date: August 1
 Distance: 2 miles
 Update: 1,000-athlete limit reached in 3 weeks
 Website: www.humanrace.co.uk/more-info-on-nokia-thames-swim-407.html
- New Event: **Copa Master de Natación (International Masters Swimming Cup)**
 Location: El Residencial Club Habana, Cuba
 Date: June 12
 Distance: 3K
 Update: 1,000-athlete limit reached in 3 weeks
 Website: For more information, contact Jorge Estevez of jen04_bci@yahoo.ca of Sunlight Tours of Cuba
- New Event: **Coppa Sicilia**
 Location: Favignana, Sicily, Italy
 Date: September 7
 Distance: Leg #1 – 6.1K on September 7
 Leg #2 – 4.3K on September 8
 Leg #3 – 9.7K on September 10
 Leg #4 – 3K on September 11

New Open Water Swims Around The World

Update: **4-part series along the beautiful coast**
 Website: Contact gfme.morici@tin.it or iscrizioni@polisportivanadir.it

New Event: **PurpleSwim Baltimore**
 Location: **Baltimore, Maryland**
 Date: **August 8**
 Distance: **1 mile, 2 miles**
 Update: **Charity swim for the Pancreatic Cancer Action Network**
 Website: **For more information, visit www.purpleswimbaltimore.org/**

New Event: **blueseventy Llandudno Sea Swim**
 Location: **Llandudno, North Wales**
 Date: **June**
 Distance: **1.5K**
 Website: **For more information, visit www.xtramileevents.com**

New Event: **Sitka Sound Adventure Swim**
 Location: **Sitka, Alaska**
 Date: **August 8**
 Distance: **10K**
 Update: **Solo race or 2-4 person relay in 55°F (12.7°C)**
 Website: **For more information, visit www.sitkaadventureracing.org/**

New Event: **Nelson Mandela Bay Splash Festival**
 Location: **Nelson Mandela Bay, Port Elizabeth, South Africa**
 Date: **April**
 Distance: **Ocean Racing Series World Championships – 2K**
Bell Buoy Challenge – 7K
King of the Bay – 5 x 400-meter elimination sprints
 Update: **3-part race series**
 Website: **For more information, visit www.splashfestival.com/**

New Event: **King of the Sea Challenge (Rei do Mar Desafio)**
 Location: **Rio de Janeiro, Brazil**
 Date: **December**
 Distance: **2K for amateurs + 10K for professionals**
 Update: **Televised live throughout Brazil from the same course that will be used at the 2016 Rio Olympics**
 Website: **For more information, visit www.reierainhadomar.com.br/**

New Event: **King and Queen of the Sea Europe**
 Location: **Lisbon, Portugal**
 Date: **April**
 Distance: **1.5K for amateurs + 5K for professionals**
 Update: **5K race is the European qualification race for elite athletes competing for spots in the annual King of the Sea Challenge (Rei do Mar Desafio)**

New Open Water Swims Around The World

Website: For more information, visit www.reierainhadomar.com.br/ and www.lisboatriathlon.com/

New Event: **AWF Silesia Open Water**

Location: **Silesia, Poland (near Germany)**

Date: **June 26**

Distance: **0.5K, 1K, 3K and 4 x 0.2K relay**

Update: **€250 for first**

Website: For more information, visit www.openwater.awf.katowice.pl/

New Event: **Swim for Kid's Sake**

Location: **Lake Maxinkuckee, Culver, Indiana**

Date: **June 12**

Distance: **0.5 mile, 1 mile, 5K, 10K and 4-mile relay**

Update: **€250 for first**

Website: For more information, visit <http://mallorymead.com/events-2/swim-for-kids-sake-2010/>

New Event: **Queensland Ocean Swim Series**

Location: **2.4K Wrecked Tangalooma Ocean Swim on March 21**

0.5K and 2.4K Cooly Classic at Coolangatta on April 11

0.5K, 3.8K Kings of the Coast on May 30

Date: **June 12**

Distance: **0.5 mile, 1 mile, 5K, 10K and 4-mile relay**

Update: **€250 for first**

Website: For more information, visit www.weekendwarriorevents.com.au

An Open Water Swimming Hero



We had the opportunity to speak with long-time USA Swimming open water swimming coach Rick Walker about his experiences at the 2009 World Swimming Championships as a referee in the women's 25K race.

"Eva Fabian and Emily Hanson [of the USA] did great. Eva led for a bit and so did Emily. They were in the race until the end," recalled Rick.

"But it was rough. [Experienced Australian swimmer] Shelley Clark was pulled from the race and we had a situation with Kate Brookes-Peterson."

After coaching at 11 world championships and numerous open water races around the world in nearly every kind of weather and water situation, Rick had a sixth sense and thought something was up when he saw Kate and wanted to be in a position to help if anything went wrong.

As he directed his official referee's boat towards the back of the lead pack, he recalled, *"I saw her go through the feeding pontoon and she didn't look good. She was struggling. Because she was a [world championship] medalist in 2007 and normally a strong swimmer, I knew something was not right."*

Rick then informed the head referee Jorge Delgado of Ecuador that he was going to look after Kate. *"When I was heading over to her [in the official's boat], she stopped, went vertical and raised her hand. Then, she went under. I was watching her position as we were moving towards her. When she came back up, she was gasping for air. She waved her hand, went limp and went under again."*

"When we got to her, her hand was up [towards the surface of the water], but underwater. I was able to reach down and grab her [underwater] and pull her up. I don't think she was going to come back up. She gasped for air [as she surfaced] and we finally got her into the boat as she passed out. She was about for about 30 seconds."

By that time, the Italian lifesaving personnel had come over to oversee the situation.

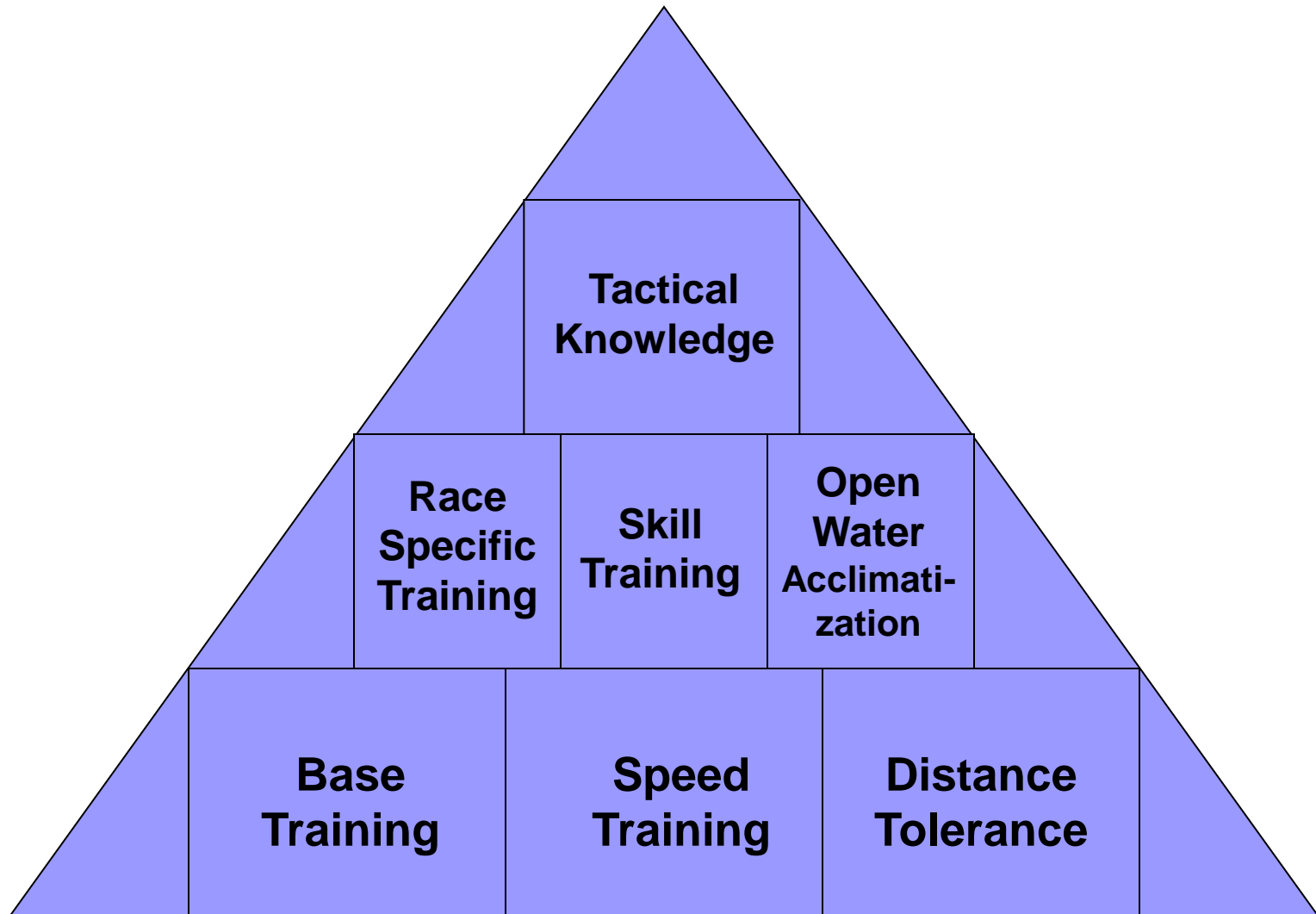
But, it was Rick's foresight, his understanding of the athletes and his knowledge of the potential dangers of open water swimming that saved Kate. *"It's a good thing we got to her before she took in too much water and drowned,"* said Rick. *"We were thankful to get her out of the water and out of danger."*

Open Water Swimming Ecosystem



Over 3,000 established annual events known in at least 85 countries

The Pyramid Open Water Success



Inner Thoughts of a Marathon Swimming Coach



Siga Rose is a renowned age-group swimming coach from the Mission Viejo Nadadores in Southern California. While her USA Swimming coaching peers, parents and swimmers know her for her age-group swimmers who have set 25 national records and her work at numerous USA Swimming Zone camps, All-Star camps and All-Star meets, Siga has used her considerable talents and dynamic personality to coach several marathon swimmers of note, including former English Channel record holder Penny Dean, Catalina Channel record holder John York and the only person to have completed a circumnavigation around Catalina Island, Cindy Cleveland.

We caught up with Siga at the pool deck at the home pool of the Mission Viejo Nadadores whose swimmers have won 20 Olympic medals and set 22 world records in the pool and talked about her athletes and coaching in the dynamic environment of the open water.

Q1: You have coached some of the world's toughest and most accomplished ocean swimmers. How did you get into coaching and where you have coached?

Siga: I started coached age-group swimming in Manhattan Beach [in Southern California] at the age of 18. Instead of a pool practice, I occasionally took the kids to the beach and got them comfortable with swimming in the water and through the surf. I would like take all the kids to the beach. They trusted me and I know it sounds mushy, but they looked me in the eyes and completely trusted me as they came through the waves. They bought into [the joy and challenge of open water swimming] totally. The trust they placed in me was great. I would hold them if they were nervous in the surf.

Q2. When did you first realize that coaching open water swimmers was something that you wanted to do?

Siga: I started to take the kids down to the beach at a time when women were not allowed to be Los Angeles County lifeguards. We could compete in ocean races – and I did pretty well – but we still couldn't be employed as lifeguards. In fact, the first woman who became a lifeguard was a woman I coached.

The ocean workouts were a good change of scenery for the kids. When you take the black line away and are alone in the open water, you can learn more about yourself.

Anyway, I took the kids to various ocean swims including the Seal Beach Roughwater Swim [that had races of various distances]. Then, one year, John [York] and Cindy [Cleveland] wanted to do the 3-mile swim. They loved it. Then, when John was 13, he and Cindy told me that they wanted to swim "there" - which was Catalina Channel.

Inner Thoughts of a Marathon Swimming Coach

So they were the ones who really got me into coaching marathon swimmers. I asked around and started to experiment. I knew if they were going to be successful that they had to train well. So, I over-trained them. If the Catalina Channel was 22 nautical miles, then I was going to train them to be able to do 27 miles. I knew they were going to be out there [in the Channel] for a long time and we had to be prepared for everything.

Q3: What were some things you did as their coach?



Siga: And, they trusted me 100% thinking I knew something. I just needed to be sure they were very well prepared. At that time, I had a group of 6-7 swimmers at Lakewood Aquatics who were really committed. The group included Dan Slosberg, Penny Dean (who held the English Channel record from 1978 to 1994), John and Cindy. While Penny trained with [legendary pool coach [Jim Montrella], Dan, John and Cindy would train with me.

I knew there would be times in the Channel when they would hit currents and they would have to use their speed to be successful. So I felt they could not lose their speed.

We did a lot of kicking and with lots of interval work [in the pool]. We tried to keep their heart rate up and we alternated slow and fast swims because sometimes you can hit currents out there and they needed to swim through a currents or tough conditions. So, we also incorporated a lot of sprint work and a lot of kicking.

Sometimes, they would get cold especially if they didn't kick. We did a lot of kicking sets with a kickboard, but we didn't use fins in those days.

We really trained hard. In the summers, we would train in the pool in the mornings, and then drive over to Seal Beach and we would swim all day long in the beach – and then we would drive back to the pool for another pool workout. We would do two pool workouts and then swim from 10 am to 2 pm in the ocean four days a week.

When they were in the channel and getting tired or cold, I would use these workouts as a way to help them. I would tell them, "Think back to the days that we swam all day long." Because they did swim all day long. Those swimmers were really committed to it.

Our sport is dangerous. There are risks and we knew we had to be prepared. For example, one time, a thick fog came rolling in and the kids were stuck out there [in the ocean] with no idea where the shore was. But, they knew to stay where they were and they waited for the fog to lift.

I used to walk along the shore back-and-forth with them every step [stroke] of the way.

I couldn't figure out how fast they would swim in the open water, so I started counting strokes per minute. Penny could constantly go at 80 strokes per minute and John sometimes got up to 84. But, we also counted strokes in the pool too.

Inner Thoughts of a Marathon Swimming Coach

Q4: Can you describe their ocean workouts?

Siga: They knew they were well prepared because they trained so much. They would swim back and forth from the Seal Beach pier to the jetty. We would pick up the pace and race for time. We swam in December when the water was really cold. Maybe they would be in the water for only 10 or 20 minutes, but I told them to get in and the cold water would toughen them up. I think I did a good job with each of them mentally and they knew they were prepared.

Of course, the lifeguards all knew and saw us training, so they knew us and occasionally helped us.

We did in-and-outs, too where they would run in and out of the surf and up to the beach. It got their heart rates up and helped break up the monotony. I wanted to shake things up. Even at the end of their channel crossings, they had to get out from the water and stand up. So we wanted to recreate the swim as much as possible in workouts.

We experimented constantly with lots of things and we finally learned what worked [well]. We talked to nutritionists and came up with all kinds of [specialty] foods and drinks. But, the kids got sick [in the water]. We tried everything [during training]. We used whatever worked for their stomachs. Cindy liked bananas and cookies. John ate cheese sandwiches, cookies and apple sauce. Apple sauce seemed to agree with everyone. But Cindy drank coffee on her [unprecedented and still unreplicated 34-hour] circumnavigation of Catalina Island. So we used what worked.

Q5: Did you have any rules on an actual channel crossing?

Siga: Yes. There were never parents on the escort boats because you never know what may go wrong or where. I would never sleep – as their coach – during a crossing and was always watching them, counting their strokes and encouraging them. When they stopped for feeding, I was the only one who would talk to them. After I was done, then the other crew members could talk. If the support crew wanted to eat, they had to go to the other side of the boat. And, if we saw sharks, we never said "sharks." We would say, "fish on left" or "fish on right" and would bring the paddlers in close to the swimmer. We would also bring the escort boat close to the swimmer and gun the engine, trying to scare it away. It is dangerous out there and you have to be alert.

Of course, sometimes, the swimmers had to pull themselves through kelp. And I could tell when Penny was a little nervous about fish she saw in the water.

Q6: Can you tell us a few swims that stood out?

Siga: I had some interesting swims. Once I had four crossings in a row. And, I did not sleep during a crossing. Coaches cannot sleep because too many things can go wrong. I remember when John [York] did a double-crossing and we finished in the morning and then I coached Cindy [Cleveland] on her double-crossing. That was very difficult

I remember on an earlier swim when I was asked to be on a swimmer's escort boat, but not as the coach. The swimmers started in the dark and swam for two hours and then quit. Suddenly everything and everyone stopped. This experience taught me a lot.

If this situation occurred when I was the coach, I would have pulled the paddlers away from the swimmer and

Inner Thoughts of a Marathon Swimming Coach

let the swimmer think about quitting before suddenly giving up.

But, there is a huge risk and it can get dangerous if people become complacent. Of course, crossing the channel has been done a lot, but you have to be respectful of the environment where we are. The ocean can be smooth and easy, but there are always risks.

We saw lots of sharks in our crossing. We saw them and we always protected the swimmer. On one occasion, one of the best skippers, Micky [Pittman], gunned the escort boat motors to scare the shark away and gaffed the shark as it got closer. He literally chased the shark away. But, we were worried about the blood and we always had people watching the front, back and sides of the boat. We used paddlers in those days with paddlers on either side of the swimmer [for safety].

Another time, I was coaching John on his double-crossing of Catalina. The next year, he got across, but that particular year, he did not. During his training, he was losing weight which should have told me something. During his crossing on the first leg, he threw up during the rough conditions. Then, the ocean calmed down. As he was coming into shore [on the first leg], I got in a skiff and escorted him into shore. After his first leg was finished, I talked to him on shore and asked if he was OK. He said he was alright and got back in. On the way back, we always check the water temperature and stroke count a lot throughout the swim. When we were coming into the mainland, less than a mile offshore, the team wanted me at the finish. In hindsight, I should have stayed with my swimmer [in the main escort boat]. But, they put me in the skiff and someone rowed me in with John into shore.

I noticed that John was not breathing very much. So I asked the paddler who was right next to him to reach out and grab him. But, he kept on swimming. So, I told the paddler to jump in [the water] and grab him. But, he still kept on swimming. So the paddler grabbed him [tighter] and put him on the paddleboard [face up]. John was just gone [hypothermic]. He was very cold and the water temperature had suddenly dropped as the water depth significantly decreases as you head into shore near the coast.

The paddler was giving him mouth-to-mouth – on the paddleboard. Of course, we had immediately called Baywatch [the Los Angeles County lifeguards] who came right away and wrapped him up immediately. I was totally a mess. They took John to the hospital where he recovered. It was a very difficult time and really difficult to me. John was like a son to me. But, that same day, I was scheduled to coach Cindy on her double-crossing.

During her swim, Cindy was actually taking care of me during the swim – asking me questions during the swim. When Cindy's swim was over, John [who was then recovered] says that he wants to do it. And, guess what, he does his double-crossing the next year when he set the record [that still stands].

Even when there were 'fish' on Cindy's swims, she would ask not to be pulled out, but we made sure that she was swimming very close to the boats and the paddlers were right there with her. The sharks were more curious than anything.

Q7: Can you tell us what you did while on the escort boat?

Siga: Because I knew these kids so well, I would draw on the different things in their lives during the swims. We used hand signals. On the escort boats, none of the support crew was allowed to yawn or eat in front of the swimmers. If they needed to yawn or wanted to eat, they had to go to the other side of the boat where the swimmer could not see them. During the feedings on the swims, none of the support crew was to talk to the swimmer until I was done talking to them [giving them instructions or encouragement]. I was strict, but these

Inner Thoughts of a Marathon Swimming Coach

rules were for the best. I always stayed right with the swimmers, always watching them and giving them instructions. Sometimes, when they got tired, I would put more people in the water with them. We rotated paddlers which they liked and asked people to swim with them. But, the [support] swimmers were never to swim ahead of the [solo] swimmer, just to the side, but never in front.

Q8: What did you do about feedings?

Siga: For the first two hours, we [stopped and] fed every hour and then we fed every 30 minutes. Then, we would go every 15 minutes. Even if they were not hungry, I would tell them to take a bite or a drink. I always started off firm. I was serious because [coaching] was hard work.

I told the skipper that he was the one who would call the swim [in case of an emergency or tough conditions]. I asked the skipper to tell me if the swimmer was staying in one place. I needed to know this information. If the swimmers were swimming in place, then we could change our direction or swim a little further or at a different angle. Mickey Pittman of San Pedro was the best, he is a wonderful man. He really wanted it for the swimmers.

Open Water Swimming Over The Next Century



100 years ago, our society and expectations were much different.

The average life expectancy of an American was only 47 years and only 14% of the homes in the U.S. had a bathtub. Traffic was not a problem as there were only 8,000 cars in America and certainly not in Las Vegas which only had a population of 30 people. Only one person had crossed the English Channel, very few people had even seen the Catalina Channel, freestyle had just been introduced to England (in 1902) and the Olympics just had its first swimming competition in a pool.

Up until then, all the swimming events at the Olympics (1896 in the Mediterranean Sea, 1900 in the Seine River, 1904 in a lake and 1906 in a bay) were held in the open water.

With the last 100 years having brought significant change to society, mankind has benefitted and been challenged in a profound number of ways - in all areas of society. As we try to imagine the social changes that will occur over the next 100 years, our readers imagined future marathon swims that may take occur by intrepid swimmers who dream big and challenge the upper boundaries of their physical and mental strengths.

1. A 110K swim across Lake Titicaca from Copacabana in Bolivia to San Carlos de Puno in Peru at an altitude of 3,812 meters (12,506 feet).
2. A staged swim or staged relay along the entire 1,240K (770-mile) coastline of the state of California.
3. A staged swim or staged relay from Key West to Miami in the state of Florida, 154 miles swimming a cool 2.5 knots outside the reef along the Gulf Stream.
4. A staged swim or staged relay around the island of Oahu in the state of Hawaii, an approximate 375-mile journey around a tropical paradise starting and finishing in the famous Waikiki Beach.
5. A circumnavigation around the Big Island of Hawaii would have to take into consideration the lava flows that continue to make the island bigger.

Open Water Swimming Over The Next Century



6. Because the pristine waters of Crater Lake in the state of Oregon is a special geological wonder of North America, swimming the 9.7K (6 mile) length of the lake will probably be done with a carbon-neutral manner, if at all due to federal restrictions.
7. Montauk in Long Island, New York to Block Island in the state of Rhode Island.
8. Block Island to Point Judith in the state of Rhode Island.
9. 23 miles from Plymouth to Provincetown in the state of Massachusetts.
10. Swimming underneath eight bridges in the state of New York in seven days in a staged swim or staged relay between 1. Rip Van Winkle to Kingston/Rhinecliff, 2. Kingston/Rhinecliff to mid-Hudson, 3. Mid-Hudson to Newburgh-Beacon, 4. Newburgh-Beacon to Bear Mountain, 5. Bear Mountain to Tappan Zee, 6. Tappan Zee to George Washington, and 7. George Washington to Verazzano-Narrows.
11. There will undoubtedly continue to be all kinds of solo swims across the various waterways of the Great Lakes of North America.
12. The 4,800K (3,000-mile) Inter-coastal Waterway along the East Coast of the U.S. would take a swimmer or a relay through natural inlets, salt-water rivers, bays, sounds and man-made canals.
13. 162K (100 miles) from Harwich, England to The Hook of Holland is a tough swim that currently takes about four hours on a fast speed ferry.
14. As we were informed by Lewis Pugh, if a swim around Greenland, the second biggest island in the world, were possible, it would also be a very sad day for mankind for the sea at the top of Greenland is currently frozen over with multi-year ice.
15. In Asia, Kunashiri Island or one of the Habomai Islands to the Nemuro Peninsula in Hokkaido to Hokkaido in Japan in the north Pacific Ocean.
16. 108K (67 miles) from Japan (Yonaguni Island) to the east coast of Taiwan in the East China Sea would be an extremely tough, but doable swim for the right person guided by an expert pilot, supported by an experienced crew, under the ideal conditions.
17. Italy to Albania seems like another good, difficult and remarkable swim for a solo swimmer

Open Water Swimming Over The Next Century

or relay.

18. The Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas) to Argentina is 212 miles that would absolutely stretch the imagination of physical and mental strength.

19. A staged swim or staged relay between Sicily and Africa.

20. Any number of circumnavigations around the as-yet-unconquered Channel Islands of California, where swimmers would face a rough, wild and physically demanding challenge, but in relatively mild water temperatures in August and September.

21. A staged swim or staged relay crossing of the Sea of Cortez (Cortés or Mar Bermejo or Golfo de California) at any point would be another remarkable accomplishment. This channel separates the Baja California Peninsula from the Mexican mainland.

22. An approximately 260-mile staged swim or staged relay circumnavigation around Long Island in the state of New York where numerous lighthouses would constantly serve as landmarks.

23. 361 miles from San Diego to Scammon's Lagoon in Baja California, Mexico that is currently done every by the La Jolla Cove Swim Club as a virtual swim.

24. A nearly 162K (100-mile) swim between the shortest points across the middle of Lake Superior.

25. 3.8K down the Grand Canal in Venice, Italy.

26. 1,776K (1,115 miles) down the Grand Canal of China, starting in Beijing and ending in Hangzhou in a canal that was built between the 5th century BC to 618 AD.

27. A canal/river swim from Lake Mead in Nevada to Yuma, the southernmost point in the state of Arizona, assuming the waterways are contiguous.

28. 55-mile swim from Key West to the Dry Tortugas in the state of Florida.

29. An approximately 180-200 mile swim across Florida using rivers, lakes and canals from the Gulf of Mexico to the Atlantic Ocean.

30. 500K (310 miles) up the St. Johns River as it is the only river in the state of Florida that flows north. Swim the entire river.

Open Water Swimming Over The Next Century



31. 160K (99 miles) from the west coast of Taiwan to the east coast of China across the Taiwan Strait would be a swim of monumental proportions, both athletically and politically.

Akin to Lynne Cox's epic swim across the Bering Strait between Little Diomedede Island in Alaska and Big Diomedede Island in Russia which caught the attention of President Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev, a relay swim across the warm-water, relatively shallow (55-meter) channel would certainly capture the close attention of at least 20% of the world's population and the world's media.

Of course, a four-way solo crossing of the English Channel and other such really long-distance solo swims at established waterways may also be in our open water swimming future.



But, theoretically, a solo swim around the world would be possible if the problem with gravity could be found. In the case that the Mir Space Station were equipped with an Endless Pool, a round-the-world swim would only take 90 minutes to complete, but it would most probably be considered an assisted swim.

Our community's creativity and talents never cease to amaze us, so as time marches on, we are confident there will be some incredible swims in our future.

Triathletes and Open Water Swimmers – Endurance Cousins



Every triathlete is an open water swimmer with additional interests and capabilities.

While open water swimmers focus their efforts in the 70% of the Earth covered by water, triathletes focus their efforts in both terrestrial and aquatic venues. While swimmers arm themselves with lanolin and ear plugs, triathletes go to battle with wetsuits, Garmin units, aerodynamic wheels and running flats. While swimmers fight through cold, rough water against strong currents, triathletes go headlong through hot lava fields against scorching winds.

Their DNA, their outlook and their goals are strikingly similar.

They both train feverishly. They both strive to reach their potential. They both compete to the max. They all profoundly respect the efforts of their fellow competitor and enjoy the camaraderie of like-minded competitors. In the world of sports, there could not be any closer relatives.

Triathletes of all ages, abilities and backgrounds are extraordinarily focused individuals. In many ways, they do exactly what open water swimmers do when they get together: talk about training regimens, share racing experiences and discuss their next races.

One of the core values of USA Triathlon is to value fitness and health through exercise, the spirit of competitiveness and the pursuit of excellence. This core value is, without question, the same held by the global community of open water swimmers. The USA Triathlon staff, headquartered in Colorado Springs, Colorado at the US Olympic Training Center, is committed to the following philosophies:

- Think Creatively
- Operate in a Race Mode
- Engage Globally
- Inspire Excellence
- Act with Integrity

These five cornerstones of USA Triathlon are also similar to what happens in the global open water community.

Think Creatively

Open water swimming race directors around the world are increasingly creative. From Rio de Janeiro's 10K race that involves five 2K ocean loops interspersed with a 150-meter run in the soft sand of Copacabana Beach to the Great Swims in Great Britain, open water race directors are raising to the increasing demand to make creative, fun, enjoyable races.

Triathletes and Open Water Swimmers – Endurance Cousins

Operate in a Race Mode

The sport of triathlon is moving at the speed of light - and open water swimming is trying to catch up. USA Triathlon offers an amazing range of services, from specialty children's races to a collegiate recruitment program. The sport's introduction at the 2000 Sydney Olympics has really spurred it to strive for lofty goals. Similarly, open water swimming is attempting to match the pace of the triathlon world. New races are being introduced all the time in all kinds of lakes, oceans, bays, seas, fjords, rivers, reservoirs, canals and rowing basins. At the USA Swimming National Open Water Swimming Championships in Long Beach, California, new races will be introduced for the athletes (Open Water Pursuit and Sea Sprints) as well as split times for marathon swims.

Additionally, Spectator Boats will be introduced at the Championships where coaches, parents, reporters and fans can board authentic Italian-style gondolas and watch up close the athletes go shoulder-to-shoulder over the race course.

Engage Globally

Just as triathlons are exploding worldwide, so is open water swimming with over 3,000 sanctioned races being offered in 2010. Back in 1999 before triathlon was an Olympic sport, there were few race directors who wanted to limit participation. Now, triathlons worldwide regularly sell out and the sport is offering an increasing number of race formats.

Inspire Excellence

This is where both triathlon and open water swimming truly shine. Whether athletes are multi-sport focused or single-mindedly focused on swimming, these endurance athletes truly push the limits of what humans can do – especially as the athletes get older. The number of 50+ year olds swimming the English Channel or doing the Hawaiian Ironman is bewildering. The fastest growing demographic in open water swimming is women over the age of 40 and the female gender's percentage of triathlons is similarly growing.

Act with Integrity

Travel from point A to point B, either as a triathlete or as a swimmer – there is nothing more purely sporting than that. Athletes know in their hearts when they performed well. This is why there are so many smiles at the end of a triathlon or open water swims. The purity of effort is embodied by those big, huge smiles, heartwarming hugs and handshakes of congratulations. While triathletes are happy to hear "*You are an Ironman,*" open water swimmers love the sound of "*You made it!*"

USA Triathlon is reaching out to masters swimmers. This is a great first step in bridging the gap between the two sports - a beginning to build an ideal synergistic relationship.

It has always been our position - since the 1980's - that the sports of triathlons and open water

Triathletes and Open Water Swimmers – Endurance Cousins

swimming can do so much good together. As a start, we believe these cooperative initiatives can include the following:

1. Share Coaching Expertise

Open water swimming coaches live, breathe and dream about the open water. This is what they do, day in and day out. Experienced open water swimming coaches have been doing or watching races in open bodies of waters for decades. They have seen nearly every kind of racing condition in all kinds of climatic conditions. They have saved people, they have coached people in rough conditions and in cold-water conditions. Triathlon coaches know much about nutrition, the capabilities, the concerns and the physiology of an adult population. These experiences, know-how and expertise should be shared for the benefit of both constituencies.

2. Hold Joint Training Sessions

Triathletes go for training runs with runners and long bike rides with cyclists. Triathletes can befriend open water swimmers and both can enjoy joint open water swimming sessions - which is already happening all over the world on an informal basis. If a triathlete is new to the sport or slower than their open water swimming counterparts, then the triathlete can wear wetsuits or fins to keep up. This is already done in places from La Jolla, California to the island of Malta in the Mediterranean Sea. Open water swimmers greatly appreciate sharing their love for the open water.

3. Hold Joint Races

Over 1,000 race directors conduct over 3,000 USA Triathlon-sanctioned races in the United States every year. The race directors obtain permits, arrange for safety personnel, set turn buoys and swim starts and finishes (known as T1 transitions). The infrastructure is set to add open water swims to these triathlons without much of an additional cost. After the heats of triathletes go off, then the open water swimmers can compete on the same course in an independent open water swim. The swimmers can then cheer on their triathlon cousins after their race is over. The triathlon race director already has personnel on the water who can help conduct the event - and a website to accept additional entries.

4. Share Successes and Failures

As both sports grow, there are bound to be problems and issues regarding operational, logistical, financial and rules. Both sports can share their successes and failures with each other so both sports can resolve problems and anticipate issues.

5. Conduct Mentoring Programs

The fear of the open water is very well-known. We have documented what triathletes and swimmers fear in the open water. But open water swimmers have conquered these fears. Experienced open water swimmers love to help others do the same. There also seems to be a mutually beneficial opportunity for triathletes to convince their swimmer friends to go for bike runs or training runs.

6. Share Marketing Expertise

This is where the sport of triathlon can really help the sport of open water swimming. While many triathlons have gone corporate with professional event management companies, most open

Triathletes and Open Water Swimmers – Endurance Cousins

water swims are still organized by cities, small teams or individuals with small budgets. Although many open water swims prefer to retain their personal touch, 'professionalizing' the organization of open water swims will help bring in more sponsors and more direct benefits to the participants.

7. Celebrate a Healthy Lifestyle

Running, biking and swimming is important for a population that is becoming increasingly sedentary and out-of-shape. Maintaining muscle tone, cardiovascular endurance, flexibility and a low body fat percentage are all results of both triathlons and open water swimmers, especially as the general population ages. Joint camps, clinics and conferences could help both sports.

Triathlon, in particular, can and is reaching out to younger athletes, getting them involved at earlier ages. Open water swimming can also make inroads to young children, as they do in races from the La Jolla Roughwater Swim in California to the Nike Swim Miami in Florida and many places between. Make it fun and they will come.

8. Share the Enjoyment

Sharing stories of endurance and inspiration helps both sports. At triathlon conferences, there are always opportunities to hear inspirational stories. Great triathlon speakers abound. Some of these stories bring tears to your eyes. The open water swimming community rarely provides the same opportunities to its swimmers who always enjoy sharing stories and experiences and getting motivated by each other's efforts.

9. Share Data and Coordinate Research Projects.

Data helps know where the sports came from and where they are going. Research helps define specific benefits of technique and training for the advancement of the sport. Both triathlon and open water can share demographic data and trends and research results with each other for all athletes.

10. Coordinate Race Sanctions and Insurance.

U.S. Masters Swimming requires a race sanction for any competitive event, clinic or camp. USA Triathlon requires its own sanction. And USA Swimming requires its own separate sanction. As a result, open water race directors often obtain three different sanctions and then they have to separately start the races – and ask non-members to purchase a one-day membership. This is a confusing situation for race directors. The situation could possibly be solved if USA Triathlon members and, for example, U.S. Masters Swimming members had the opportunity to join each other's federation for a reduced fee. The membership numbers would undoubtedly rise and USA Triathlon members would receive USMS SWIMMER Magazine and U.S. Masters Swimming members could receive the benefits of the triathlon community. Mutual benefits would abound. After what we have observed from the triathlon's creative leadership, collaboration and cooperation between the triathlon and open water swimming world can certainly benefit both communities.

These dreams, born in the 1980's, are closer to fruition in 2010 than ever before. We believe they will come through sometime during this next decade while retaining their own independent lifestyles, traditions and legacies.

Triathletes and Open Water Swimmers – Endurance Cousins

Photo shows Sarah McLarty, an accomplished open water swimmer who transitioned successfully to the professional triathlon world.

Swim Near The Rocks



Swimmers know the dangers of swimming near the rocks while in the open water. Bruises, bumps and scraps are generally things for open water swimmers to avoid. But, swimming near these rocks is cool.

El Arco de Cabo San Lucas in Mexico (above) is a distinctive rock formation at the tip of Cabo San Lucas at the southern end of Mexico's Baja California Peninsula.



The **Giant's Causeway** (Clochán na bhFómharach) is an area of 40,000 interlocking basalt columns, the result of an ancient volcanic eruption, in County Antrim on the northeast coast of Northern Ireland. A World Heritage Site and a National Nature Reserve, the Giant's Causeway is one of the greatest natural wonders in the United Kingdom.



The **Externsteine** is a distinctive rock formation located in the Teutoburger Wald region of northwestern Germany.

The formation consists of several tall, narrow columns of rock which rise abruptly from the surrounding wooded hills. The name probably means "stones of the Egge".

Swim Near The Rocks



Preikestolen or Prekestolen, is also known as Preacher's Pulpit or Pulpit Rock, and by the old local name Hyvlatonnå.

Preikestolen is a massive cliff 604 metres (1,982 feet) above Lysefjorden, opposite the Kjerag plateau, in Forsand, Norway.

The top of the cliff, approximately 25 by 25 metres square is a famous tourist attraction in Norway.



The **Twelve Apostles** are located in Port Campbell National Park, nestled among Victoria, Australia's most spectacular coastline scenery.



Nanya Rock is a fantastic rock formation and sea-eroded coral shore in Taiwan. The coastline epitomizes the beauty of weathering and wave action on stone.

Swim Near The Rocks

Nanya was created by the weathering of the sandstone that lines the shore. The oxidation of iron ore within the striations of the stone has given it a beautiful striped pattern.



Percé Rock is one of the largest natural arches in the world. It rises sheer from the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Quebec near the village of Percé, Canada.

It is a massive limestone stack 433 metres long, 90 metres wide and 88 metres at its highest point.



Koh Tapu is one of the most renowned islands in Thailand, located at Phang Nga Bay in Phuket.

Featured in the 1974 Bond film "The Man with the Golden Gun", Koh Tapu soon became known as known as James Bond Island and started to attract visitors from all over the world.



Moeraki Boulders on Koekohe Beach on the Otago Coast on South Island in New Zealand have been eroded by wave action from the cliffs of soft, black mudstone.

They originally formed on the sea floor when the mudstone was accumulating during the early Tertiary period some 60 million years ago.

Swim Near The Rocks



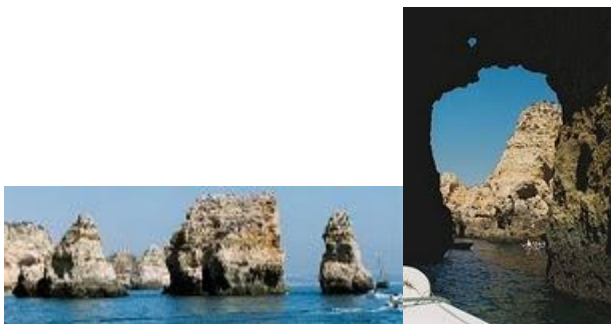
Pyramid Rock in Pyramid Lake, an artificial salt lake, in Nevada, USA. It was formed by Pyramid Dam on Piru Creek, near Castaic, California.



Diddo Clark used to organize a swim starting at **Point Bonita**, part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area in San Francisco.



Goa is on the western coast of India and the site of the **India International Triathlon** where the weather is especially pleasant and sunny from November to March.



Ponta da Piedade in Lagos is a jewel of the Portuguese southern coast.

Eco-Swimming, Staying Green in Blue Waters



Eco-tourism, adventure travel, sustainable tourism, responsible tourism, nature-based tourism, green tourism have entered our lexicon with multiple meanings and interpretation. As our world gets smaller (figuratively) and the world's population grows (literally), mankind's impact on the environment will continue - both for the good and the bad.

From the United Nations' designation of 2002 as the International Year of Ecotourism to the Center for Responsible Travel's goal to transform the travel industry as a driver of positive change, eco-tourism has been a building awareness since the term was first used over 30 years.

But with our Earth covered over 70% with water, the global open water swimming community is quietly, steadily and increasingly doing its part on the grass-roots level in this global movement.

We call these efforts, eco-swimming.

The **Open Water Swimming Dictionary** defines eco-swimming as *any open water swim, relay, staged swim, race or charity swim that (1) aims to protect, conserve or call attention to the environment or ecology, (2) improve or protect the welfare of marine life or the local or indigenous area, (3) incorporates education of the natural environment or ecology, (4) is conducted in an ecologically-sustainable or environmentally-friendly manner, (5) is held in areas that are under environmental protection or that protect marine life, (6) aims to create or enhance environmental or ecological awareness, (7) raises money or provides direct financial benefits for conservation, marine life or environmental protection, research and/or education, (8) builds awareness or provides education of a local community or culture, (9) lobbies local governments or officials for access to, protection of or a clean-up of a waterway, or (10) minimizes the impact of mankind on the environment.*

The sport has hundreds of examples of admirable solo and community efforts: Lewis Pugh's solo swim in a glacial lake on Mount Everest calls attention to climate change while Aaron Piersol's televised Race for the Oceans in Florida calls attention to the conservation of ocean resources and the Bonaire EcoSwim, the namesake of this movement.

Eco-swim was first coined by Randy Nutt, who founded the Bonaire EcoSwim in 2000 and was the 2008 World Open Water Swimming Man of the Year, after he met Mark Burnett of American television Survivor and Eco-Challenge fame.

Eco-swimming is done all over the world from the Clean Half 15K Marathon Swim in Hong Kong that features the carbon-neutral relay option (where outrigger canoes are used instead of motorized boats) to a new multi-race swim in Acapulco that calls attention to the protection of the fragile coastlines of Mexico.

Eco-Swimming, Staying Green in Blue Waters



Eco-swims also include charity swims that collectively raise millions of dollars for a variety of causes, such as James Pittar's solo efforts on behalf of the Fred Hollows Foundation and the efforts of the swimmers in the RCP Tiburon Mile who have raised money for Hospice care for the past decade.

The eco-swim trend will not only continue, but it will expand exponentially as the sport grows with grass-roots efforts from the Baykeepers who help fight pollution in San Francisco Bay to the Dialog Across the Sea Project in North Africa become more numerous over time.

Best wishes those in the global open water swimming community who are doing their part to stay green and protect the environment which we all enjoy, utilize and share.



Open Water Swimming Trivia

- Q1. *What city gave Gertrude Ederle a ticker-tape parade? For extra credit, what year?*
- Q2. *What year did the La Jolla Rough Water Swim start?*
- Q3. *Who was the first person to swim across the Cook Strait? For extra credit, what year?*
- Q4. *What famous beach did Keo Nakama finish on when he became the first person to swim across the Molokai Channel?*
- Q5. *What serious illness did the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim gold medalist from The Netherlands overcome?*
- Q6. *What famous professional swimmer got disqualified during the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim in Beijing?*
- Q7. *What two islands did Lynne Cox swim between when she crossed the Bering Strait?*
- Q8. *From 1978 to 2005, two Americans consecutively held the English Channel record. Who were they?*
- Q9. *Who was Petar Stoychev's escort boat pilot when he became the first person to break 7 hours across the English Channel?*
- Q10. *What American swimmer won seven World Professional Marathon Swimming Federation titles during the 1980's? For extra credit, whose record did he break?*
- Q11. *How many mothers competed in the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim at the Beijing Olympics? For extra credit, who were they?*
- Q12. *In what country is the longest professional marathon swimming race held? For extra credit, how long is this race?*
- Q13. *Who is the current Chairman of the International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame? For extra credit, who is the current Honorary Secretary?*
- Q14. *Have more than 15,000 people compete in the Midmar Mile nearly every year since 2005? For extra credit, how many Olympic swimmers competed in the 2009 Midmar Mile?*
- Q15. *Do more people compete in the Sun Moon Lake International Swim in Taiwan than the Vansbrosimningen race in Sweden?*
- Q16. *How much money is won by the male and female winners of the RCP Tiburon Mile?*
- Q17. *When was the Rottneest Channel first swum? For extra credit, who did it?*
- Q18. *How far was the longest professional marathon swim ever held in America? For extra credit, where was the race held and how many people finished the race?*
- Q19. *What colors are the warning and disqualification cards in competitive open water swimming?*
- Q20. *How many transponders are used by each swimmer in FINA races or at the Olympics?*
- Q21. *What open water swimming distances are raced at the FINA World Swimming Championships? For extra credit, what new open water swimming race will be added beginning in 2011?*
- Q22. *How many professional open water swimming circuits are sanctioned by FINA? For extra credit, what is the formal name of these pro circuits?*
- Q23. *Where will the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim be held at the 2012 London Olympics?*
- Q24. *Where will the Olympic 10K Marathon Swim be held at the 2016 Rio Olympics?*
- Q25. *Who won the women's 2008 Olympic 10K Marathon Swim?. For extra credit, what country is she from?*

Open Water Swimming Trivia

- A1. **New York City (in 1926).**
- A2. **1916 (near San Diego, California).**
- A3. **Barry Devonport in 1962 (in 11 hours and 20 minutes).**
- A4. **Hanauma Bay (on Oahu).**
- A5. **(Maarten van der Weijden overcame) leukemia.**
- A6. **Vladimir Dyatchin (of Russia for two yellow cards).**
- A7. **Little Diomedede (of the US) and Big Diomedede (of Russia).**
- A8. **Penny Lee Dean (from 1978 to 1994) and Chad Hundebly (from 1994 to 2005).**
- A9. **Michael Oram.**
- A10. **Paul Asmuth broke John Kinsella's previous record set between 1974 and 1979.**
- A11. **Two, Angela Maurer of Germany who finished 4th and Edith van Dijk of The Netherlands who finished 14th.**
- A12. **Argentina, the 88K (54 miles) Hernandarias-Parana FINA Grand Prix race.**
- A13. **Kevin Murphy (of the UK) is the Chairman. Dale Petranec of the USA is the Honorary Secretary.**
- A14. **Yes, 13 Olympians competed in 2009.**
- A15. **Yes (nearly 22,000 people swim the Sun Moon Lake International Swim and over 8,000 people compete in the Vansbrosimningen).**
- A16. **US\$10,000.**
- A17. **Gerd von Dincklage-Schulenburg on January 24th, 1956.**
- A18. **60 miles across Lake Michigan in 1963 with only two finishers (Abou-Heif and Ted Erickson).**
- A19. **Yellow for warnings and red for disqualification.**
- A20. **Two – one on each wrist.**
- A21. **5K, 10K and 25K. The 3-person, mixed-gender 5K Team Time Trial event will be added in 2011.**
- A22. **Two, the FINA 10KM Marathon Swimming World Cup and the FINA Open Water Swimming Grand Prix.**
- A23. **The Serpentine (a man-made lake in Hyde Park) in London in 2012.**
- A24. **Copacabana Beach in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.**
- A25. **Larisa Ilchenko from Russia.**

Cold-water Swimming



World Open Water Swimming Association provides ten basic tips of advance when swimming in cold water for the first time.



1. Use lanolin to help alleviate some of the "sting and shock" of cold water. The lanolin should be firmly pressed into the skin, especially around the neck, under arms, around the torso and upper legs. It is best to apply with rubber gloves and, remember, lanolin is tough to get off. See photo of International Marathon Swimming Hall of Fame inductee Britta Kamrau with lanolin on before a cold-water race on left.

2. Use tight-fitting silicon ear plugs; an old surfer's trick.

3. Wear 2-3 heavy silicon swim caps - or better yet - a neoprene surfer's cap that completely covers the ears with a strap that goes under the chin.

4. Acclimatize over time where one gradually builds up from a few minutes in the cold water to a few hours. It helps if one gets in twice per day, if possible.



Cold-water Swimming

5. Swim as close to shore as possible, even if one has to fight through surf. If not possible, then swim with a kayak, boat, paddleboard escort, or with another swimmer.
6. Use a surfer's rashguard, wetsuit, triathlon speedsuit or technical swimsuit.
7. Drink warm liquids before and immediately after.
8. Jog along the shore, initially with only then feet, then the lower legs and then the upper legs in the water if the water is really too cold to first jump in. Then get your hands wet and splash water on your face and upper body before jumping in.
9. Roll over on your back if you hyperventilate when you first get in. Take deep breaths while you are swimming backstroke. Try to kick strongly, but take smooth long strokes with your arms while you control your hyperventilation. After you can breathe normally, then roll over on your back and start to swim freestyle.
10. Think positively, but always think intelligently. If you are shivering or continue to hyperventilate, get out.

Upper photo of Graham Grindley-Ferris in Cape Town, South Africa. Lower photo of Melanie Gow and Tony Sellmeyer swimming off of Robben Island in South Africa. Photo of Britta Kamrau by Dr. Jim Miller.

A Champion in the Pool and Open Water



One of the greatest swimmers of all time, Greta Andersen, followed up her gold and silver swims in the 1948 Olympics with a stellar open water swimming career.

Andersen did long solo swims in Hawaii, competed in her head-to-head races in Mexico against the world's top men, did incredibly tough workouts off the coast of California, competed in the famous 36 – 60 mile races in Lake Michigan and won the English Channel races in the 1950's,

Andersen colorfully relived her solo attempt in the Molokai Channel, from the island of Molokai to Oahu, where she swam in a shark cage. After getting seasick in the turbulence caused by the shark cage, she swam outside the cage only to be surrounded by sharks. *"After swimming with dolphins around me for a while, I thought everything would be OK,"* recalled Greta who had no intention of getting out. *"But, I kept on swimming and they were all around me, circling underneath. Always circling. I was in the water for a long time, but then they finally pulled me out. There were no questions asked. They just got me out of there. I had a lot of sponsors in those days - Hilton Hotels, Roman Meal Bread - so we were disappointed. But that is our sport - there are always risks."*

And her English Channel races were endurance drama covered by the world's media. *"We had helicopters covering the races. There was so much coverage and so many boats. With the traffic in the Channel, there was a lot happening. We didn't have all the technology like today. We just swam hard."*

And so she did.

"I used to hire lifeguards to paddle for me. [Down by Belmont Plaza], I used to go for daily 10-mile swims. Every day, training hard."

Andersen was renowned for her relentless stroke-per-minute pace.

For a swimmer who held the world record in the 100-meter freestyle from 1949 – 1956 and who won a gold medal in 100-meter freestyle and a silver medal in the 400 freestyle relay at the 1948 London Olympics, these 10-mile ocean training swims were most certainly a step up in yardage. But her hard work paid off. She set English Channel records - in both directions - from France to England in 11 hours and 1 minute, and from England to France in 13 hours and 10 minutes.

A Champion in the Pool and Open Water

She also was the first person to swim the Santa Catalina Channel both ways (see photo above). *"No one else had done a double-crossing before, so it was something to do. In those days, we didn't know about the effects of the tides on a swimmer. I remember swimming for 4 straight hours over the same rock off of Catalina. 4 hours and I was swimming hard over the same rock. Instead of 26 hours, I should have done a 22-hour swim,"* laughed Andersen as she recalled her historic swim. *"If I had known what I was getting into, I wouldn't have done it."*

After a strong first leg of 10 hours and 49 minutes, she eventually finished in 26 hours and 53 minutes-per-minute pace. Her determination and sheer exhaustion upon her completion were quite dramatic ... as has been her career in the pool and open water.