

The 37th Annual Swim Around Key West (12.5 miles)

Saturday, June 8, 2013

Dear Swimmers,

May 28, 2013

I hope you are well and in great shape for our soon to be here swim!

As you know our Host Hotel and Swim Head Quarters is **the Lexington Hotel**. The address is **3250 North Roosevelt Avenue, Key West, Florida**. The local number is **(305) 294-6681**. If you are driving it is at the entrance of Key West, just over the Cow Key Channel Bridge (veer right and take the first immediate left turn into the "In Kahoots" parking lot).

The Registration: June 7, 2013

In order to expedite things we will open for you to register at 3:30PM. Registration will close at 5:30PM. Our MANDATORY Pre Race Meetings begins promptly at 6:00PM. When you register you will receive your official swim T-shirt and your "goody bag." We will not be signing anyone in after 5:30PM so it is advisable you arrive in ample time before the mandatory meeting. We want to avoid a line of latecomers. Make note that we will not be registering any swimmers the morning of the event.

The Mandatory Pre Swim Meeting:

Our **mandatory** pre-race meeting is scheduled for Friday, June 7th beginning promptly at 6:00PM at the pool area of the Lexington Hotel. My goal is to run an efficient meeting that will not exceed 75 minutes. At this important meeting we will discuss safety concerns, the rules and go over the course. We will also answer any questions you may have.

Both solo swimmers and kayakers and relay team members and their boat crews are all required to attend this meeting.

The Morning of the Swim:

Things tend to be hectic the morning of the event, which is Saturday, June 8th. You would be wise to arrive early to Smathers Beach. Smathers Beach is located on the Atlantic side of the island. We will begin at the west end (right near the rest rooms). There will be free parking available along the road and on the Bridle Path across the street from the Beach. I suggest you arrive at the Beach by 6:30 AM and surely no later than 6:45. Remember you need to find your kayak and kayaker. The support boat used for relay teams needs to be positioned for a prompt start. At this time you will be marked on the front of your thighs (or knees if you wear "jammers") with your number and your category. You also must apply your sun protectant.

Each swimmer entered must be marked (all relay team members will wear the same number - that is your team number). Please do not apply sunscreen to the front of your thighs or knees, as we will not be able to mark you where you apply grease. Note: Only the first swimmer of a relay team will be on the beach the other team member(s) will be on the support boat. Those swimmers on relay teams can find a marker on a Committee Boat near the start line. Use the markers and mark yourselves, then return the marker to those on the Committee Boat..

The first wave of swimmers will leave at 7:30AM. These are swimmers who wish a little more time to get through the tidal windows to complete the course. All first wave solo swimmers that swim the full distance will be awarded with a finisher's pendant but will not be eligible for a placement award. Only in exceptional cases would we recommend a relay team to start in the first wave. However, anyone, solo or relay, that begin in the first wave can receive a finisher's medal but not a placement award.

{Should you swim the first wave? If you swim one mile in a pool at a comfortable pace and you complete that in 45 or more minutes, you should definitely swim in the first wave. If you swim your mile in 40-45 minutes, it may be a wise choice. If you swim the mile in 35-40 minutes you probably should enter the second wave. You must declare your choice at the registration.}

The rest of the field (i.e. the second wave) will leave promptly at 8:00AM.

We will have a group prayer at 7:15AM and then the first wave swimmers will enter the water. The start line is at the first pole in the water. All swimmers must remain behind this pole until the race begins.

The finish is a land finish. Over the past years due to winds and rough water we had difficulty clocking swimmers times. The finish this year calls for the swimmers to swim to and then around the start pole and then swim straight to the beach (approximately 100 yards) just on the shore line there will be a clearly marked chute that you must pass through. The timers will record your time as you cross the line on the beach. This will be explained in greater detail at the pre-race meeting.

Swim Suits and Apparel:

There has been some controversy over what is an acceptable suit in this swim. The Annual Swim Around Key West has chosen to adopt the following rule for swimsuits. If your suits does not comply you will be disqualified, that means no awards, no official stats, no finisher medal if you are a swimmer. Swimmers please read this carefully:

Costume: A swimmer may wear only one suit. Swimsuits shall not cover a man's body higher than the top of the pelvic bone or the belly button and shall not cover any part of the body below the thigh. Swimsuits shall not cover a woman's body outside the shoulder-joints or above the shoulder-line and shall not cover any part of the knee. The material of suits may consist only of cotton, lycra, nylon, polyester and spandex. In short, your suit cannot cover your knee.

No swimsuits extending below the mid-thigh, body suits, wet suits, rash guards, cut off T-shirts or "skins" are allowed. No fins, no snorkels water wings or floatation devices are permitted.

If you have any doubt as to what suit you will be permitted to wear in this open water event, please check with the Race Director. If your suit is rejected be sure you have a suit that complies with you. Please take this seriously. It is ungracious to place the Race Director in the position of disqualifying you on race day.

Silicone, Lycra or latex hats are permitted.

During the Swim:

The Race Director is Terence White. His cell number is (305) 304-4341. Kayakers are recommended to have a cell phone in case of emergency. Please note you must have a case or bag designed for the exclusive purpose of protecting your phone from the water. (A plastic baggie is a poor choice!). The VHF radio frequency will be 74. We will give you these numbers in sealed plastic at registration. Keep it handy in the kayak or boat for quick reference.

If you have any emergencies call Mr. White or flag down any vessel with a yellow flag flying. There will be 7 "Committee Boats," each flying a yellow flag, who will be keeping watchful eye on all swimmers, kayakers and support boats. There will also be several "safety

kayakers on the course.” These “Committee Boats” are primarily for your safety but they will also act as umpires. If you stand up, hold on to you vessel or violate any other rule you will be disqualified. All final judgments will be made by Mr. White and are not contestable.

Solo swimmers, you must have your kayaker near you through the entire swim. The Key West Harbor is a highly trafficked area; your kayaker is your main line of defense. Swimmers remember you need to stay hydrated. The water is already in the mid 80’s.

Relay teams must have a boat to carry the team member(s). There is no land entry for relay swimmers. The transitions will be marked with bright yellow buoys at miles 4 and 8 for the 3 person and at mile 6 for the 2 person. Maps with the mile indicators will be provided for your study. There will be no other mile markers on the actual course.

Each relay member must complete the full distance before exiting the water, and the next swimmer entering at the appropriate transition buoys.

The swim is why you trained and traveled all this way. Our hope and prayer is that you have a tremendous experience. It will not be boring. You never see the same thing twice as you swim around the island. If conditions are difficult for one leg, remember that since you are swimming in a circle that head wind will eventually become a tail wind (or vice versa). There will be something different around every corner. Relax and enjoy your swim, take in every second as a memory. Five plus hours seems a long time to swim but you will be surprised how quickly the time will pass!! Make it count.

The Finish:

There are ten wooden poles that mark Smathers Beach as a swimming area. No motorized boats are allowed inside these wooden poles. These 10 poles will indicate the last half-mile. Swimmers must stay outside the poles (keep them on your right). As you move forward you will see a buoy at what was the start pole. Swim to that last pole/buoy and then make a sharp right turn and swim into the beach. You have about 100 yards to the beach. You will see a clearly marked chute on shore and there you will find the finish line. As you cross the finish line your time will be registered. At that point you have completed the 12.5 mile course!

After passing the Finish Line solo swimmers will receive their pendant. The last leg relay swimmers will receive their and their relay team member’s medals at the finish line. They will be expected to disburse the medals to their team mates

Motor Boater’s: please return your orange numbered pennant to those on a Committee Boat at the finish. Kayaker you must turn in your pennant on reaching the beach.

Exiting the Water:

We have unique custom made finisher’s pendants for all **solo** swimmers who complete the course. They are sterling silver and designed to be worn as jewelry. This will be placed on your neck as you exit the water. The finishing swimmers in the 2-Person and the 3-Person relays will receive the medals for your full team upon completing the course.

There will be a special gift given to all kayakers upon returning your pennant to our kayak coordinator Katie Leigh on the beach. Katie will also have checks for those under contract. If you have a rented kayak Katie will direct you to the area to place the rental for pick-up.

We plan to have refreshments on the beach so you can relax after your swim and compare your experience with the others.

The swim event officially ends at 3:30PM any swimmers still swimming will be picked up by a Committee Boat and escorted to the Beach

If you need transportation from any of our host hotels, please let the organizers know immediately.

The Post Race Awards:

There has been a significant change made in this area. Our traditional buffet has been cancelled. The In Kahoots Restaurant has catered the buffet in the past but the restaurant will be closing the week after our event. Practically speaking that means this: We will hold our awards distribution on the beach at 3:30PM

We will go three deep overall in the solo division in both male and female and have awards for solo Master's and senior Master's. We will also go three deep in the 2 person and the 3 person relay divisions.

We have many gift certificates from local restaurants and business. Every registered swimmer present is eligible to be part of the drawing. We have other gifts and surprises planned, however only those present are eligible. We will conclude our event after we distribute the awards.

Miscellaneous:

- If you are flying, carry your swim needs in your "carry on." It is sad to arrive and your luggage ends up somewhere else.
- Plan to have plenty of liquid on your kayak or boat.
- The sun here is brutal; lots of zinc oxide is advised. Protect your lips and have some Vaseline under your arms to prevent chafing. You will want to have protective clothing as your return to the beach. Consider having hats, sunglasses, anything to protect your arms and legs from the sun's rays. There is little shade on the beach.
- Consider having an extra pair of goggles with you (just in case).
- We will have water, Gatorade, Infinit products, fruit, burgers and garden burgers on the beach after the swim. If you have special recovery food or drinks make sure you bring it with you.

We look forward to seeing you soon.

Bill Welzien

Organizer (and Swimmer!)

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