

## ENDURANCE: 39TH ANNUAL SWIM AROUND KEY WEST



Photos by RON COOKE/The Citizen

Blue skies and calm seas greeted 160 swimmers as they take off for the start of the 11 a.m. wave of the 39th annual Swim Around Key West.

## Ideal weather welcomes racers

BY RON COOKE  
Key West Citizen

KEYWEST — The conditions were perfect Saturday for the 39th annual Swim Around Key West.

Powder blue skies and calm emerald seas greeted nearly 160 swimmers and support kayakers for the 12.5-mile course that started and finished at Smathers Beach.

Seth Kurtz of Lexington, South Carolina swam to first place overall in a time of 4:20:59, five minutes ahead of Miami resident Eric Sullivan, who finished with a time of 4:26. It was the exact time Sullivan swam in the event two years ago.

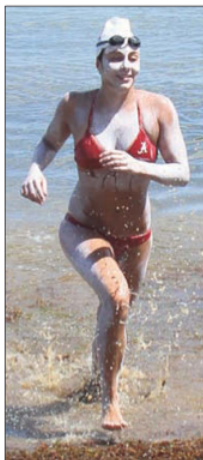
The quiet high school junior at Lexington High said it was a good day for the swim, but he struggled three-quarters of the way through the course.

"Coming around mile nine I was swimming in like 6 inches of water, so I was pulling to the side and not over the top. It was really hard," Kurtz said. "It seemed shorter than I thought it would be. I thought it would be longer."



Seth Kurtz celebrates first overall as he exits the water at Smathers Beach.

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University of Alabama swimmer Victoria Hove exits the water at Smathers Beach to take first in the women's division and third overall with a time of 4:37:20.

## Swimming

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Sullivan, 49, said the setting was perfect as she chugged fresh coconut milk. "This is the seventh time I've attempted it and sixth time I've finished," said Sullivan, who

has a personal best time of 4:21. "It was perfect, the water was relatively cool, overall it was probably the best I can remember. It was good."

University of Alabama swimmer Victoria Hove was the top female and was third overall with a time of 4:37:20.

"This is my first time, it

was fun, it was great," said Hove, who specializes in the butterfly stroke and the individual medley for the Crimson Tide swim team.

"The last two miles were the hardest," she said. "My shoulders and everything started to hurt. The conditions were beautiful. I could

not have asked for better places where I could feel it running against me. Other day. The currents were nice, than that, it was gorgeous."

rcooke@keysnews.com



Tiffany Scanlon and her support kayak were hit by a double wake just off the rocks of Fort Taylor Beach.



RON COOKE/The Citizen

Eric Sullivan, second overall, drinks coconut milk at the finish line on Smathers Beach.