

The 36th Annual Swim Around Key West (12.5 miles)

Saturday, June 23rd, 2011

Dear Swimmers,

June 12th, 2012

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** (formerly the Holiday Inn; formerly the Hotel Key West- such is the life of a franchised entity). 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:

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 late comers. 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 22rd 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 23rd. 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 on the Bridle Path across the street from the Beach. I suggest you arrive at the Beach by 8:30 AM and surely no later than 8:45. Remember you need to find your kayak and kayaker and boat for relays needs to be positioned for a prompt start. At this time you will be marked on the front of right thigh with your number. 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 sun screen to the front of your right thigh 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 the start boat at the start line. Use the markers and mark yourselves, then return the marker to those on the start boat.

The first wave of swimmers will leave at 10:00AM. 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 10:30AM.

We will have a group prayer at 9:45AM and then the first wave swimmers will enter the water. The start/finish line is at the first/last pole in the water. All swimmers must remain behind this pole until the race begins.

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 mid-thigh. Swimsuits shall not cover a woman's body outside the shoulder-joints or above the shoulder-line and shall not cover the any part of the body below mid-thigh. The material of suits may consist only of cotton, lycra, nylon, polyester, and spandex.

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.

No swim suits extending below the mid-thigh, body suits, wet suits, rash guards, cut off T-shirts or "skins" are allowed.

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.

No fins, no snorkels water wings or floatation devices 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 5 "Committee Boats," each flying a yellow flag, who will be keeping watchful eye on all swimmers, kayakers and support boats. There will also be one jet ski and 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 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 at 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. 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 of mile. Swimmers are advised to stay outside the poles (keep them on your right). As you move forward you will see a Boat at the last/first pole. Swim between that boat and the pole (that is the finish chute). The Race Director will be in that vessel and will register your time.

Once you cross the start/finish pole you have completed the 12.5 mile course!

Motor Boater's: please return your orange numbered pennant to those on that boat at the finish. Kayaker you must turn your pennant in 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. For the first time we have finisher's medals for **relay teams** that complete the course. The finishing swimmers in the 2-Person and the 3-Person relays will receive the medals for your full team upon completing the course Look for the orange cones and flags on the beach as this designates the area you should exit the water and enter the beach. 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 will close at 6:00PM and so any swimmers still swimming will be picked up.

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

The Post Race Buffet:

At 7:00PM, following the swim we will reconvene at the pool area of the Lexington Hotel for our awards buffet. All our swimmers, kayakers and family members are welcome to attend. This is put on by the Sun Collection of Key West the owner of the Lexington Hotel, the

Comfort Inn; the Days Inn; and the Quality Inn. This great effort is led by Mona Lisa Rainer (please don't tell her I mentioned her name!!) of the "Making a Difference Team and the Lexington Hotel manager Sita Narine and the Food & Beverage Team. They are real champions!

While we are eating the placement awards will be given out. 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 expect to conclude our evening about 9:00PM.

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 may want clothes/hat etc. to cover up at the beach as there is little shade.

*Consider having an extra pair of goggles with you (just in case).

* We will have water, Gatorade, 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

35th Annual Swim Around Key West (12.5 miles)

June 4th, 2011

If you are staying at the Lexington Hotel, the Quality Inn, The Comfort Inn or the Days Inn and you need transportation to the start line, please notify me immediately. If we have enough we will arrange for a shuttle.

You will also receive your bright day-glow orange pennant with your number on it. This pennant must accompany you to the beach and be affixed securely to your kayak or support boat. If you fail to bring this pennant with the morning of the event you will not be permitted to swim. This pennant identifies you are an entrant in the 36th Annual Swim. On the morning of the swim you will have your right thigh marked with the number on your pennant; under that number another number will be placed to indicate which category you are entered into. Make sure there is no grease on your right thigh