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BIG EFFORT SWIM

Swimmer and Spotter Manual

Introduction

This is a guide to help make your Big Effort Swim as successful as possible. This manual address some of the main concerns and question most swimmers have with this kind of event.

Marathon Swim and Half Marathon Swim

Goal of the Spotter and Swimmer

All Big Effort Swim athletes will be required to have a spotter in a kayak to support them. The swimmer may provide their own support person and if that is unavailable the swimmer will have one of our volunteer spotters assigned to them upon arrangement. The spotter is the most important link between athlete and a successful swim. The spotter will provide the athlete with their nutrition needs, but the MOST IMPORTANT role of the spotter is to paddle at the proper “speed” in a line that is as straight as possible. The role of the Athlete is to swim and sight off the spotter.

Try to swim with the spotter directly to the right approximately 3 meters Or 10 feet away. Every time you breathe to your right side, sight your spotter and adjust your line to mimic theirs. If you prefer, the spotter can be to your left. Some athletes choose to swim behind the spotter; this method, however, requires that you lift your head to sight.

Remember that this swim is for charity and your well-being is of the utmost importance. Do not go beyond your abilities.

Responsibilities

Swimmers

- Swim
- Trust your spotter knows where to go
- Swim in a direction that keeps you close to spotter
- Hydrate and ingest nutrition/calories
- Enjoy the swim

Spotter

- Paddle in a straight line
- Trust swimmer will follow you
- Paddle at the proper speed
- Carry water, nutrition and safety gear
- Monitor swimmer in case of an emergency

Boat Speed

Boat speed is the responsibility of the spotter. It is adjusted based on the speed of the swimmer: paddle so that your boat speed matches your swimmer’s speed.

Perfect speed control– swimmer stays within the fore and aft shadow of the kayak

Direction

The spotter is in charge of the direction that both the boat and swimmer travel. The spotter should always be in control and must never relinquish control.

Nutrition

Nutrition is initially the responsibility of the swimmer. Athlete should organize the calories ahead of time, planning on being in the water for 14 hours max (it's always better to carry extra). There will be lunch provided at the halfway point at the North End beach. It is recommended that each athlete drinks water every hour and has calories/food every 2 hours. Athlete needs to discuss with the spotter as to the timing of the nutrition breaks, and the expectations they have.

Tips for the Swimmer

1. Be prepared for a long swim down the lake. There is a 14 hour time cap
2. Don't forget your extra goggles, anti chafe products, wet suit, towel, foot wear and dry warm clothes to change into (Dry Bag Check-in at Swim Start).
3. Make sure you thank your spotter. The Ultra Swim experience is dependent on many people, but the most important person in having a good event is your spotter.
4. Nutritional Products - maintain your calorie and fluid intake, even during the swim.
5. Don't do anything that is not within your training.

General Information for the Spotter

Be sure you have read, understood and signed the Support Person Waiver and submitted at event package pick up the day prior to the event. Your Swimmer will not be allowed to start without this being done.

All swimmers and spotters must attend the pre-swim safety orientation prior to event to be able to swim. Time of safety orientation will be posted on the website when determined.

Equipment

- You must have a PFD for yourself and an extra one with you for your swimmer.
- A bailing device and a tow rope
- A flag and whistle for safety purposes
- You must have a cell phone (use a plastic zip lock bag for protection).
- Radio for communication with safety vessels/safety director
- Make sure you bring warm clothing and sun protection, and water and a snack.

Athlete and Spotter

- **Listen carefully** to the instructions provided to you at the beach by the race announcer and attend the Final Instruction meeting on the beach.
- If, on the morning of the swim, you feel like it is not your day, you do not feel well, or you are uncomfortable with the conditions, we encourage you to **consider safety first**, and not do the swim.
- Have a safety plan of sorts if you start to struggle during the race. If you swallow water, or are coughing, or are anxious or panicky, stop swimming, roll onto your back to make breathing easier, hold on to your swim buddy if you have one. Take a break and work at calming your breathing down. If you can resume your swim do so at a pace that is comfortable and manageable, with stops as needed. If you are unable to proceed, alert your support spotter that you no longer wish to continue and have them alert a safety/support motor boat to pick you up.

During the Race

Above all, enjoy your swim! Take a moment while you are out there to have a look around and marvel at what you are accomplishing!

Remember that this swim is for charity. With pledge-it the more kilometers you swim the more money your supporters will donate to charities, so if you feel as though you cannot continue, communicate with your spotter and have them signal for a pick-up. Your effort is what is important in the Big Effort Swim.

If your swimmer needs a break have them hold onto the **FRONT** of your boat (if possible) until ready to continue to swim. They can also hold onto their swim buddy if they have one or just float with the buoyancy of their wetsuit. **DO NOT HAVE YOUR SWIMMER GRAB THE SIDE OF YOUR BOAT, THIS COULD RESULT IN A TIP OVER.**

Do check-ins with safety vessels via radio every so often to update the swimmer's progress. Swimmers will be live tracked with GPS trackers. It is the responsibility of the spotter to ensure that the GPS tracker stays dry along with the radio.

It is possible that your swimmer will decide that he/she cannot complete the swim, due to bad conditions, illness, anxiety, or exhaustion. Please do not try to convince your swimmer to continue if they report this to you. They know best what they are capable of doing. If they tell you they wish to stop, please alert a support motorboat by waving your paddle or blowing your whistle. The support motorboat will come to pick up your swimmer and take them to the finish line.

Raise your flag, yell, or use a whistle when your (or any) swimmer needs assistance and alert the closest powerboat. Use your radio to communicate with safety vessels/safety director. Stay with the swimmer and offer the extra PFD. **In case of emergency, call the Safety Director Victoria Henne at: 250-584-4326** and she will direct you what to do next.

You should NOT attempt to pull an injured/fatigued swimmer into your canoe, kayak. Instead, have the swimmer hold onto the PFD or carefully onto the front of the boat. You should then signal and wait for help from the lifeguards on the powerboats.

If the swim is cancelled due to sudden bad weather, please assist the swimmers. Where possible, direct all swimmers to return to the start if it is close enough, otherwise assist them as they wait for powerboats to come return them to the start.

Post Swim

After the swim, celebrate your accomplishment at the Beach BBQ where awards will be handed out as soon as we are able to complete the final results, approximately by 1:45 pm but sooner if everyone is off the water. The BBQ and Awards Ceremony are included in your registration fee.



