

Appendix H

The 1998 season of Catalina Channel swims was an exceptional one. There were four individual crossings and eight relays making the summer of 1998 one of the most successful in years. In addition, new records were set for the oldest man and the mixed relay for the thirties and the sixties age groups.

On July 31st, Jamshid Khajavi became only the third person to have completed four crossings of the Catalina Channel. Not only did he finish his fourth swim but he did it in his fastest time of 14 hours, 52 minutes and 45 seconds.

At the beginning of the crossing, at 11:24 pm, there was no wind or swells but this quickly changed as a NW swell of 1-2 foot appeared. The water at the start was 69 degrees but quickly dropped to 67 degrees.

Throughout the swim Jamshid fed every thirty minutes. His stroke count began at 66 per minute and at its lowest dropped to 52 per minute.

The swim was very uneventful until the morning when a school of dolphins passed Jamshid. As the morning ended the swells disappeared and the water became flat as a pond, according to observer Frank Reynolds. In the last hour, the wind picked back up as Jamshid approached the Cabrillo Beach cliffs. At 2:16 in the afternoon, Jamshid emerged from the completing the 110th crossing of the Catalina Channel. This swim was over an hour and 13 minutes faster than his best swim of Catalina.

The second swim of the summer was done by Bob West. This was his second assault on Catalina. He had swum it when he was 55 and held the record for the oldest for numerous years. At 62 and nine months on August 27th, at 4:11 am, Bob entered the water at Doctor's Cove with the goal of regaining the oldest swimmer record.

Initially the ocean was calm, flying fish and a sea lion were visible. Bob began with a stroke count of 56 and fed every 20 minutes. He had not only kayak support but numerous swim pacers. Some of these were real and one was a blow up doll to keep Bob laughing.

In the early morning hours dolphins were seen leaping 300 yards in front of the ship. By mid morning the wind began picking up. By 11 am there was a two foot swell. In the distance white caps were visible.

Numerous support swimmers paced Bob while others entered the water to take pictures of him. There were a few times the boat had to circle to pick up the pacer. Then disaster struck. There was a problem with the transmission on the boat which forced the boat into circling. Throughout this Bob was getting off of course. He was too far to the East so he had to head into the swell for awhile.

In the afternoon a tanker crossed in front of the boat. Bob was slowing and his stroke count dropped to 54. His feeding breaks slowed from six seconds to around 30 and he dropped his feeding to every fifteen minutes. He wanted to know how far he had gone and wanted to talk a little more. This is very normal for the latter half of a channel crossing.

At a 4 pm feeding the paddler asked Bob to count backwards from ten to check on his mental status. He did it quickly and accurately. He wasn't cold but a bit discouraged. The rough seas made him feel he wasn't making any progress. There were still two foot swells, whitecaps and an eight knot wind.

The navigator changed course around 5 pm to let the current push assist Bob instead of fighting it. Bob's stroke count picked up for a half hour. As a pacer was preparing to enter the water he realized the Zodiac had broken loose from the boat. The swimmer was left with the kayakers and a pacer while the boat went in search of the Zodiac. The rescue only took six minutes. More dolphins were spotted. Bob stopped briefly then started again. His stroke count and enthusiasm seemed to increase. At 7:35 pm the zodiac was sent in to find a landing place for Bob. He had a half mile to go.

Bob became the oldest person to swim Catalina when he emerged from the water at 8:01 pm at Portuguese Bend. His swim took 15 hours 49 minutes and 49 seconds, a very respectable time considering the challenging conditions and problems encountered on the swim. He kept fighting and succeeded in setting a new world record. What an amazing accomplishment for the 111th crossing!

The third swimmer of the summer was Michael Stanton, a 34 year old basketball player from San Diego. Michael was a self taught swimmer who decided to attempt the Channel. During his training swims he would wear shorts with pouches in them so he could carry numerous water bottles and packages of Power Gel.

Michael entered the water at Catalina at 5:57 pm on September 26th and yelled "Let's go" to his paddler. It was a calm night with air temperatures ranging from 67 to 64 degrees. The water was a warm 68 degrees and there were small swells of one to two feet throughout the night. Michael felt the water was warm and even felt like a spa. At times, he was accompanied by dolphins and even a few seals were spotted during the night.

Prior to the swim he ate a pasta meal and drank over 100 fluid ounces in preparation for the swim. During the swim he drank either water or Cytomax, between 12 and 16 ounces almost every 20 minutes. He also had some Power Gel feedings and a few bananas. He had an upset stomach and threw up in the early hours of the swim. During the last two hours of the swim he kept refusing feedings but was convinced to feed a few times.

During the third hour he began having leg cramps. He had to adjust his stroke and limit his kicking. This caused him to be less streamlined and swim flatter in the water. Every time he tried to roll into his arm entry his leg cramps would reappear. Michael's stroke count averaged 60 strokes a minute throughout the swim. At one point he was breathing only on his left side but he was able to return to his normal stroke.

Michael was accompanied by one paddler, Brent Thompson. He paddled the complete crossing and was pretty exhausted at the finish.

Besides the leg cramps, Michael felt comfortable the whole swim. He enjoyed the crew support, the dolphins and the warm water. Only as he approached the finish at Pt. Vicente did the water conditions get a little worse, when he ran into a Southerly current. This slowed his progress but he was able to fight through it. With the waves breaking he crawled out of the water cautiously, attempting not to be smashed on the rocks and to avert his legs from cramping again. He slightly injured his wrist while preventing a fall on the rocks. After 14 hours 10 minutes and fifty eight seconds Michael became the 86th person to swim Catalina and it was the 112th successful crossing.

The final swimmer of the summer was a 23 year old Alaskan, Heather Royer. She trained with the Dolphin Club in San Francisco. Heather had swum on a women's record setting relay when she was an undergraduate at Pomona College in 1994. This

sparked an interest in open water swimming which has grown immensely over the last four years.

Heather entered the water at Doctor's Cove on Catalina at 1:48 a.m.. The water temperature was 67 degrees but there was a strong onshore swell, very rare for the Island. As the swim continued, this dropped to a consistent one to two foot swell.

It was a dark night with little wind and less marine life. Pete Huisveld had designed three sets of hanging lights which put light on the side of the boat instead of on the swimmer. This worked very well as the swimmer could see the boat and the people on the Bottom Scratcher, Greg Elliot's boat. In addition, Pete rigged a sea anchor off of the stern to help slow this larger craft. It worked extremely well. This prevented the navigator from getting too far ahead or behind the swimmer. Unfortunately this snapped off in the morning.

Heather drank eight ounces of tropical Cytomax every fifteen minutes for the first seven and a half hours. She also had a package of Goo every hour. This worked well until the water temperature dropped and she became fatigued. At this point she switched to ten minute feedings and near the end to seven minute feedings. Her feedings lasted from eight seconds at the beginning to a minute for the longest feeding.

Heather was accompanied by kayaker Dave Clark and one of her training partners, John. She also had her other training partner, Becky, swim with her once during the night and once mid morning. Throughout the swim her crew asked her mind riddles which she answered well and with enthusiasm. At one point in the fourth hour she asked, "Where are the comments from the peanut gallery?" She kept her spirits except at one point when she thought she was going to die. Two swimmers hopped in to keep her going while the crew prepared for a kayaker change. This made Heather speed up and smile. Any despair she felt disappeared quickly. At this point in the swim her stroke count had dropped to 72 from an average of 76. After the kayaker switch this increased to 80 strokes a minute which she held through the end of the swim.

Heather climbed up the rock beach, just South of Point Vicente. Her time was 8 hours 42 minutes and 57 seconds. This was the third fastest women's time in this direction, the fifth overall as she became the 87th person to conquer the Catalina Channel.

Besides four individual crossings there were eight successful relay crossings. The first of these was a team from San Luis Obispo with three teams swimming on August 28th. The first problem was the boat returned late from Bob West's individual swim and then needed to be repaired. The swim was supposed to start at 10 pm but it didn't begin until 12:29 pm. This took some of the steam out of the younger swimmers but they were able to overcome these problems and successfully cross the channel from the mainland to Catalina.

The three teams were:

Blood Letters
Courtney Brigham
Matt Kincade
Becca McLean
Daniel Gibbons
Kerry Brainard
Sylvia Glenn

Chumleys
Rick Graves
Kelly Swanson
Kristin Vesnaver
Cooper Johnson
Nicole Tetreault
Duane Leib

Up Chuckers
Ginny Farmer
Amy Miglizzo
Leisha Masi
Matt Gibbons
Jaime Riley-Akers
Kathi West

The members of the relays ranged from age 12 to 60. Each group of three swam twice except the first group which swam a third leg.

As it was decided to swim from the Mainland to Catalina the water was considerably colder at the start. This is due to the upwelling current off of the Mainland. The first three swimmers, Courtney, Rick and Ginny entered the water at Cabrillo Beach at 11:58 pm.. The water was a frigid 62 degrees. Likewise, the air temperature was 65 degrees. Each started out quickly with stroke counts in the 70s to 80s. By the 1/2 hour mark each stroke count had dropped. This can be attributed to the cold water and the decision not to feed during the hour leg.

By the time Kelly, Amy and Matt entered the water the ocean temperature was up to 65 degrees. Each of these swimmers was able to maintain their stroke counts within a small range.

The swim itself was rather uneventful with few sightings of marine life. There was a dense fog for most of the early hours.

As the night wore on the wind increased and swells of four to five feet were encountered.

The third leg was swum by Becca, Kristin and Leisha. Each maintained a stroke count of 76 to 84 but none varied more than four in the hour. This was challenging to do as there were whitecaps and waves.

The fourth group consisted of 12 year old Cooper, 14 year old Daniel and 16 year old Matt. The relays had covered 5.68 nautical miles when they entered the water. The water temperature had raised to 66 degrees. The three maintained similar stroke counts which made it easier for them to stay in a pack.

At 3:58 pm the fifth leg, with Nicole, Jaime and Kerry entered the water. The air temperature was still in the low 60's while the water temperature held at 66 degrees. By the end of their leg there were four to five foot swells.

The sixth leg was swum by Duane, Kathi and Sylvia, the latter who is 60 years old and the swimmer's coach. Throughout the hour the height of the swells increased but luckily so did the water temperature.

By the time the first leg reentered the water the water was 68 degrees, a major increase from the 62 degrees in their first leg. For three hours everything stayed the same . Finally the sun was up and gradually the water temperature increased to 72 degrees while the air increased to 80 degrees.

Only a few swimmers were seasick on this attempt and despite the rough conditions, cold water and late start, each relay was successful. The swimmers walked onto the Island at 11:29 am as a group. Their final time was 12 hours 31 minutes and 30 seconds. These relays became the 32nd, 33rd and 34th to conquer the Catalina Channel.

The 35th and the 36th relays also swam together beginning on August 30th at 10:12 pm. The relay swam from the Mainland to Catalina. The members of the relays were as follows:

Disorganized
Karen Burton
Dirk Bouma
Terri Walters
Jara Lang

Confused
Lisa Hazen
Regan Scheiber
Jane Cairns
Pete Huisveld

Elise Melberg
Russ DeFusco

John Hallman
John York

Within this group was a wide range of talent. Three members, Pete, Karen and John York had swum the Catalina Channel and each in world record time. Pete and Karen still hold the records. In addition, Dirk was on the US national team which holds the English Channel record and Lisa has swum on the professional circuit for five years. Other members had never swum in the ocean. Similarly, the ages of this group range from 25 to 46 years old.

At 6:52 am on August 31st the swimmers walked ashore on Catalina Island. The relays' times were a respectable eight hours, 40 minutes and 23 seconds.

The next relay, the Blues Turning Gray, was comprised of six members in their sixties, three men and three women. As a mixed relay in one age group this relay needed only to finish in order to establish a new record as it was the first mixed sixties relay. This was a strong probability as five members had swum on at least one successful relay in the past.

The members of this relay were:

Betsy Jordan	Tony Joseph	David Lamott
Janet Lamott	Peter Riddle	Dudley Wood

The relay swam on September 2nd from Catalina to the mainland. The first swimmer was Peter. He entered the water at 4:05 am by climbing over rocks into the 71 degree water. It was a warm night, 69 degrees. Peter swam well and there were no difficulties during his leg.

Betsy was the second swimmer. The water and air temperature was maintained. She swam well throughout.

The third leg was swum by Janet. Accompanying her was a swim pacer. The water dropped a degree as did the air temperature. During this leg dolphins were spotted as the sun rose.

David swam the fourth leg. The air temperature increased slightly during his swim.

The fifth leg was swum by Tony. Everything went smoothly during his leg.

Dudley was the sixth swimmer on the relay. He switched sides of the boat to get out of the fumes. Debbie, the pace swimmer, was back in the water. Fifteen minutes into the swim more dolphins were spotted. There were strong swells but it didn't seem to bother any of the swimmers.

At 10:05 am Peter started his second leg of the relay. For the next four hours each swimmer switched sides trying to get away from the diesel fumes. The water temperature increased to 71 degrees while the air temperature raised to 86 degrees. By 2 pm the water calmed down, leaving only a small chop for the swimmers to have to contend with during their swims. At 4 pm the water temperature dropped six degrees, to 64 degrees.

The final swimmer was Betsy. At 5:13 pm she cleared the water's edge and climbed up the rocks to end the swim. The overall time was 13 hours, 8 minutes and 47 seconds. This established a record for the mixed relay for the sixties age group.

Two relays, the Solo Wannabe's I & II entered the Catalina Channel at 1:28 in the morning on September 14, 1998. The relays consisted of the following members:

Solo Wannabe's I

Kevin Eslinger
John Lapp

Mac Hall Becky Jackman Jill Lapp
Cathy Ruff

Solo Wannabe's II
Shannon Di Martino
Ron Leithiser
Carol Sing

Jo Lamott
Mike Meaney
John Skoglund

Both relays were mixed, with three men and three women, however only the first qualified for a record. The first consisted of swimmers ranging from 30 to 39. The latter relay members ranged from 22 to 55.

September 14th was a calm, windless night. The air temperature was from a low of 64 to a high of 82 degrees, while the water was a warm 72 by Catalina but dropped to 64 degrees near the finish.

During these relays the swimmers didn't drink and no stroke counts were taken. The group was however, being entertained by flying fish and at times by seals.

Jo and Becky swam the first leg while Kevin kayaked. John and Carol entered in front of the first swimmers, giving them time to warm up and adapt to the water and night. After a quick changeover the second leg began. Everything went well. The third group of swimmers was Jill and Shannon who jumped off of the side of the boat to take over for their leg. At the same time there was a kayaker switch. The fourth legs were swum by Cathy and Ron. After the fifth leg of John and Mac there was another kayaker switch. Still the water was 70 degrees but the air had dropped to 64 degrees by 5:30 in the morning.

The sixth changeover was a bit unique. At 6:29 Kevin did a front flip off of the side of the boat to begin his leg with Mike. Not to be outdone, Mac swam butterfly back to the boat.

As the second legs for each swimmer began conditions were still calm, the sun was breaking through the clouds and the air temperature was beginning to rise. At 10:22 in the morning, numerous dolphins approached the boat, curious as to what was going on in the water.

Just after 1pm the Zodiac was taken in to shore to find an acceptable landing for the relay swimmers. Each group had swum twice and Jo and Becky entered for a third time. Not only did these two start the swim but they walked ashore at 1:35 pm, just 12 hours, 6 minutes and 29 seconds after they began. These relays became the 38th and 39th relays to swim the Catalina Channel. The first relay also set a mixed 30's relay record as it was the first time this relay had been swum.

1998 was an extraordinary summer of swims as all the relays and four of the five individual swims were successful. In addition, one record was broken, the oldest by Bob West at 62, two were established-the mixed 60's and the mixed 30's. With these swims 87 people have swum the channel with 113 crossings and 39 relays have similarly completed the crossing.