

Welcome to the Maggie Fischer Memorial Cross Bay Swim



Welcome swimmers, kayakers, family and friends to the Maggie Fischer Memorial Cross Bay Swim! As you train throughout the months leading up to the swim, we want you to once again focus your thoughts on a beautiful summer day on the Great South Bay. Blue skies, 80 degrees, calm seas and a light wind out of the south. Visualize an awesome sunrise to escort us across the bay for the start. Think about seeing old friends and making some new ones. At the start there will be over 100 swimmers who have worked just as hard as you to

be there for one incredible day. A few will have traveled from great distances and some will be no stranger to the bay and the task in front of them. Others will be looking across for their first attempt. At the 5 mile mark imagine passing the beautiful Sigrid with its tall mast showing the way to the finish as you hear all of your family and friends that have gathered at Gilbert Park to cheer the swimmers in. The last 1/4 mile will never be in doubt as you feel the excitement carry you to the shore. The crowd will get louder and louder until you can see the bottom of the bay rising up to meet you. Finally you can put your feet down and savor the final yards of your journey across the amazing Great South Bay!

Please Remember to Support the Hospice

The Maggie Fischer Memorial Great South Bay Cross Bay Swim is proud to be associated with the Hospice Care Network Children's and Family Bereavement Program. Each year the Cross Bay Swim is carried out to benefit this fine organization with contributions being provided to the Hospice to help in their efforts in the community. A sponsorship level of \$500 or more is expected. Many companies also have matching programs and charitable grant programs that others have leveraged in the past. Please consider these when pursuing your sponsorships for the Cross Bay Swim. Supporting the Hospice Care Network's Children and Family Bereavement Program is something that we should all be proud of. Please take some time over the coming months to gain sponsors for your swim in order to help this organization in their mission. Below is some information on the Hospice from their website. (Hospice-Care-Network.org)

Our Mission:

Our Mission is to enable persons to live in peace and with dignity in a caring environment during the final stages of life by offering care and comfort both to them and to those with whom they share their lives. We develop and provide individualized programs of care and supportive services during dying, death and bereavement that enhance quality of life by addressing physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs.

If you would like to mail a donation please make checks payable to:

Maggie Fischer Memorial GSB Swim
PO Box 332, Brightwaters, NY 11718

Swim History, How Many?



Lined up for inspection at the Riviera Beach Club, Nightwaters, just before crossing the Great South Bay the "crazy" way on Friday prior to the Cross Bay swim are 19 of the 21 starters in the event. Left to right, top photo, are George Marshall, Jr., Wary Elizabeth Miller, Richard Hunt, Bill Mallmann, George Bass, Jr., David G. Bouse, William Campbell, Marjorie J. Moore, Robert Swedberg, and Al Nielsen. Robert Yff of Ocean Bay Park is not in the picture. Bottom photo shows Doug Brewster, director of the Bay Shore Tuna Club, besting instructions on the course just before the swimmers took the plunge off the dock at Fire Island to start the first Cross Bay Swim in 29 years. Photos by Parkes

Have you ever wondered how many people have made the swim across the bay? For quite a while now we have been researching the history of the swim and can finally provide a number that is close to accurate. Many of you know that the swim dates back to the 1920's and research into the local newspapers of the time indicate that the first swim across the bay appears to have occurred on July 9, 1927. The photo above shows a picture of the winner of that first swim (Marion Robarts (Tappe)) presenting a trophy to the 1975 women's champ and women's record holder, Cindy McCallen. You can click on the photo to see it full screen and read the article. At least one swim across the bay was

conducted each year until 1930 when Jones Beach (1929) and the State Boat Channel (1930) were opened which drew all local swimming events away from the larger part of the bay. This ultimately resulted in Cross



Bay Swim going dormant due to WWII until 1950 when the swim across the bay returned. The swim was held during most years until 1977 when it again went into hiatus due to the deaths of Doug Brewster and Joe Fanelli who were the driving forces in coordinating the swim since 1950. The number of swimmers varied in these earlier swims although they were much smaller than the swims that are conducted today. There have also been some oddball swims like a 1938 swim by a man trying to save his two friends after their canoe capsized off Ocean Beach. He swam for 3 hours in the dark to get to Bayberry Point seeking help. The swim records for all years are as complete as we could hope due in large part to the excellent newspaper coverage the swim had over the years. Anyway, after looking at the records closely we can say that there have only been approximately 750 individuals that have made the journey across the Great

South Bay to date. Many of these swimmers have completed the swim more than once resulting in just over 1,400 total successful swims of the bay. It is fun to look back and see others that have shared an amazing experience on a proving ground that even after almost 90 years is mostly unchanged.

Don't Panic!



What happens when you start an open water swimming race, with a strong wind, choppy water, fish swimming about, seaweed floating past and about 100 other swimmers trying to swim on top of you? You can't force the thought out of your head that this is not like running a road race and you just can't pull over and walk if you get a cramp. You may wonder what you got yourself into! All open water swimmers need to come to terms with these and other emotions at one time or another in their evolution as a swimmer. During almost any open water event there will be

something unexpected that needs to be handled and it requires a calm attitude if success is to be fully realized. The problem is really more mental than anything else and while some may struggle with this others don't even give it a second thought.

So you have been training for months in the protected environment of your local pool but on the day of the big swim you will be in a totally different element out in the open without nice straight lines on the bottom guiding your way to your objective. If you have completed an open water swim before you are probably saying to yourself "no big deal" but almost every swimmer has had some apprehension about open water and what surprises may arise. Training in the pool is great for getting you physically ready and even somewhat mentally prepared to cover the distance but you need to go further to be totally prepared on the day of the swim and for what mother nature has in store for you.

Here are some tips to help you overcome any anxiety you may be having about venturing into the open water:

- Try to relax, sounds obvious but helps to remind yourself of this when you are out at mile 3 and freaking out. Breath in – Breath out – Breath in – Breath out – Just keep swimming...
- Instead of thinking about being miles from land, think about the fact that you are only feet from your support kayak! Your kayak is there for you and focusing on your boat mentally can help distil any fear of being so far from land.
- Try to warm up a little in the water and get the heart pumping before the actual start.
- Don't start out too fast, you will be very excited at the start but remember your training and the pace you need to swim. Many swimmers swim 300 yard and wonder what's wrong, I'm feeling terrible. You're probably going out to fast.
- Slower swimmer?...start towards one side or the other or just be patient while the faster swimmers move in front. It's a big bay and 100 swimmers spread out pretty quickly.

- Repeat after me – Fish, crabs and jellyfish are my friends and will for the most part get out of my way and leave me alone!
- If you take a mouthful of water down the wrong pipe just tread water for a minute and regain your composure.
- Don't think about the whole swim at one time. Break it down into smaller pieces and take care of one part at a time. Start with Farm Shoal and the link up with your kayak and then start taking out one mile at a time. Leave thinking about the big finish for the finish!
- Simulate as much as you can in training. We'll talk more about this in future posts. For now I would recommend finding the swimmer in your local pool that makes the most waves and swimming in their lane.
- It is strongly recommended that you do not watch Open Water or Jaws too close to your swim.

Whatever situation arises on your swim the best approach is always to stay calm and not to freak out! I hope this helps you have a safe panic free swim!

Capture the Event!

The big day arrives and it is time to swim the Great South Bay. This is typically a really big event for just about everyone involved including your family and friends so why not take the opportunity to record the event. In 5, 10, 25, 40 or 50+ years from now you may very well look back on that amazing day when you seized the opportunity, had the ability, and the good fortune to make it across. Some day your kids may even decide to make the journey so why not lock it in using pictures and video! I can tell you that just about everyone I have spoken to feels that the day(s) they swam the bay had profoundly changed them forever in some positive way. Luckily you will have a kayaker with you so why not give them a camera to snap some photos during your journey across. Of course safety is most important but your kayaker should be able to capture a shot or two and some video as you swim. Maybe you will even want to take the camera at one of the shoals and snap a shot of your kayaker since they are paddling all that way for you! If you are going for the speed record you may just want to swim and let them handle the rest of the details. Here are a couple of recommendations if interested. We had posted options here in the past but to be honest, the technology has changes so fast in this area that we will leave that up to you. There are many waterproof options for capturing video and pictures so have at it. We have also been on the cutting edge with drones as well so show us what you've got!

Gear Up



Luckily for us the technology of our sport has come a long way as far as the gear used. When Gertrude Ederle's made her amazing 1926 English Channel Swim it was complicated due to the low tech equipment that they used ([Wiki Gertrude Ederle](#)). Her goggles and swimsuit were made by her sister and her use of a 2 piece bathing suit was a first as well as being borderline scandalous. She needed to melt wax onto her homemade goggles to keep them from leaking. We are lucky to be just a few mouse clicks away from whatever swim accessories our hearts desire. Here is a breakdown of what you may need as a swimmer out in the bay. We will cover nutrition and supplies for the kayak in a later post.

Swim Cap: You will receive a swim cap on the day of the swim which will be color coded and numbered. You will be required to wear this cap during the swim so you will not need to bring your own. Please feel free to bring one along if you like as a backup.



Goggles: This may be your most important piece of gear. Comfort is the key for a distance swim and nobody likes leaky goggles. Goggles that leak are just plain old torture so make sure you pick a pair that keeps the water out and won't give you a headache after wearing them for 2-4 hours. I have never had good luck with the classic goggles that fit separately on each eye but have had great success with the Aqua Sphere Seal Goggles ([Aqua Sphere Goggles](#)). These goggles work extremely well and have the added benefit of allow you to pull your swim cap over the top part of the goggle to create a water tight seal. You can find these at the Swim Outlet link provided at the right. If you wear glasses you have two options. Prescription goggles are great but will run you more money and may also limit your options. I have worn contacts under my goggles on my Cross Bay Swims with great success although you will want to remove them soon after the swim. The combination of the Aqua Sphere goggles and contacts gave me great visibility throughout the entire swim.



Ear Plugs: I have found that over the years my ears have grown weary of so much water. Ear plugs are an option although you need to be very aware of your surroundings if you wear them as it will reduce your ability to hear what is going on. I recommend the type on a string as it prevents loss in the middle of the bay. Tuck the string into your goggle strap at the back of your head to avoid the annoyance of it popping in front of your face while swimming.

Wetsuit / Swimsuit: Let's cover wetsuits first. They are allowed to be worn during the event and lots of swimmers use them. That being said we must say that the temperature of the bay during the summer averages in the high 70s so please consider that when deciding whether you will use a wetsuit as it is quite warm. Good reasons for using one may be if you are preparing for another event in colder water and plan on using the wetsuit or if you are just more comfortable swimming in one. I used a summer swim skin in my first Cross Bay Swim but opted to go with a plain short leg jammer since then was much more comfortable with the added range of motion.

There is nothing more pure than just the swimmer in a basic suit in the water as it is the same today as it was when the swim started in 1927. Try to pick something comfortable and remember that the water temp is high enough to give you the option to go without. Either way you should plan to do some swims with the gear you will wear prior to the event.

Lubrication: As previously stated the temperature of the bay is high enough so greasing up like you are Gertrude Ederle swimming the English Channel is not needed but there are still some good reasons to get some Body Glide or Vaseline out. The first is that you are swimming in salt water and the salt in the water will cause more friction than you would experience in the pool. This will usually occur at points like the armpits so putting some type of barrier in the places that rub is a great way to save yourself some discomfort. The second reason is that this barrier on the skin can help prevent jellyfish stings. Although jellyfish do exist in the Great South Bay, stings are not common and most swimmers never encounter them while swimming. If you do use Vaseline you should make sure to clean your hands well when done applying and be careful not to get any on your goggles as it can make a mess and decrease your visibility. If you do encounter jellyfish, don't worry about the white/clear ones, they don't have many stingers. I would recommend swimming around any red ones you see but they are much less common in the bay.

Clothing: It is recommended that you get on the ferry as ready to go as possible. It is a tightly orchestrated schedule on the morning of the swim and getting to the beach as ready to go as possible will decrease your stress before you get in the water. The ferry ride is open on top where most of you will sit so you will be in the wind and a t-shirt or sweatshirt is a good idea. Remember that whatever you bring will either be on you in the water or on your kayak so pack only what you think you will need. Most folks wear shirts from other events or previous swims. My personal favorite is my \$9 Aquaman shirt from Target!

Historical note: Gertrude Ederle was from New York City and actually attended the 1953 version of our very own Cross Bay Swim. She entered the water and swam the finish to encourage the contestants. We can only imagine what a thrill this must have been for all who were there on that day as she is a true sports legend.

Seasickness 101



You may be surprised at how many swimmers are out there with "Grumpy Gills" in the 4th and 5th miles. If you are prone to motion sickness you will want to pay close attention to this post. Open water swimming is unlike most land sports in that your body will be exposed to much more motion that can cause seasickness and nausea over the duration of your swim. In addition to the motion you will be also be exposed to some amount of sea water that will work its way into your system as you swim along and impact you as well. Many swimmers go the entire swim without taking any precautions and have no problems so please do not feel you should use any of these recommendations unless you are prone to seasickness and/or have experienced this on previous open water swims. Swimmers that are in the water longer will may be more apt to experience seasickness or stomach issues so please consider your projected finish time while reading this. You should always evaluate your ability to continue rationally and if the problem persists you may need to consider stopping and coming back for another try next year. The Cross Bay Swimmers are a hearty bunch but please use your head and stay safe if your stomach is not cooperating on race day and trust me when I say you would not be the first one to leave your breakfast behind in the Great South Bay on race day!

Motion sickness medications are available over the counter and may be used to prevent nausea. It should be noted that these medications can have a negative impact on your ability to swim. It is one thing to take these medications before getting on a boat but it is a totally different thing to put these in your body and then swim 5.25 miles. If you feel you have no other choice you can try these but it is strongly recommended you use them in training so you know how your body will react during the actual event. Using them for the first time at the Cross Bay Swim may very well cause you more harm than good.

Ginger Root (Ginger Gum and Ginger Tablets) – Several studies suggest that ginger may be effective in reducing symptoms associated with motion sickness. In one trial of 80 novice sailors (prone to motion sickness), those who took powdered ginger experienced a significant reduction in vomiting and cold sweating compared to those who took placebo. You can get ginger at your local health food store or online if interested.

Pepto Bismol - We have heard that using Peptol Bismol on race day may also help prevent intestinal problems both during and after the race. The active ingredient is bismuth and its use can help in a couple of ways. It can coat the stomach and prevent absorption of any bacteria you encounter as well as knock it out once in the stomach. As with seasickness tablets please do your own research and don't try for the first time on the day of the swim.

A note on Sports Drinks – It has been strongly recommended that you do **NOT** drink sports drinks during your Cross Bay Swim even if you used them while training in the pool. Salt water is approximately 3% sodium chloride that is three times more concentrated than the body's internal fluids. Your body will absorb a lot of salt from the bay while swimming and the added sodium from sports drinks may result in vomiting. It is recommended that you stick to only water or something simple like coconut water and rinse your mouth out each time you stop to drink.

A Message from your Sweep Kayak Team!



Each swimmer is required to provide a support kayaker – choose wisely. Kayaking in open water is much different than a leisurely outing on a nice summer day. In the years that I have been associated with the swim, many more kayakers than swimmers have been pulled from the water. That is the inspiration for the Sweep Kayak Team.

Each kayaker should be a strong kayaker with open water experience. Conditions in the middle of the bay are often much different than

the start, and changing weather can cause conditions to deteriorate quickly. A momentary lack of focus or bad judgment can make a kayaker a “swimmer”.

He or she will be the swimmer’s guide across the bay, providing direction with constant adjustment for wind and tides. An inexperienced kayaker can easily add miles to the swim! The kayaker is responsible for guiding the swimmer through each timekeeping gate, and making sure the swimmer’s number is recorded. If there is haze, visibility may be limited. It is up to the kayaker to have as many visual references as possible for crossing the bay.

Safety is our primary concern, and therefore all kayaks should be equipped with the following:

- A PFD for the kayaker (which should be worn at all times) and the swimmer.
- A whistle or horn to get the attention of the wonderful support crew lining the course in the event of an emergency. Kayakers should raise and waive their paddle to get the attention of one of the many volunteers for help.
- Water and nourishment for both the swimmer and kayaker.
- Sunscreen, a hat and sunglasses.
- Water shoes, although not required, are suggested.
- A dry bag to keep a change of clothes for the finish, if required. There is an outdoor shower available at the finish.
- Keep in mind that there is no bathroom for kayakers in the middle of the bay so think about that when hydrating in the morning especially if your swimmer is planning to take over 3 hours to complete the swim.
- Motivation; You are your swimmers connection to the real world while out on the bay and your enthusiasm will definitely make a difference. Know when to let them swim and know when to push them on. You may be able to help them through a rough patch or calm them down if needed. Listen to your swimmers tone when communicating with them and advise them accordingly.
- GPS; While this is something most of you will not use it is an option and has been used in the past. It can be a big emotional boost to a swimmer if you can tell them that they are

actually making progress and not really getting further from the finish. This can also tell you the actual direction to the finish and can aid in giving you a bearing. Here are the Latitudes and Longitudes for the start and finish from Google Earth: Start - 40 38 00 N - 73 13 00 W Finish - 40 42 18 N - 73 14 54 W



A Sweep Kayak Team has been established to assist all swimmers and kayakers. They will be there to guide you back toward the course or warn of any situations that you should be aware of. Listen to them! As the race progresses, the tide and wind will spread the field. The Sweep Kayak Team is there to provide direction along the shortest route possible.

Choose your kayaker carefully. A strong kayaker can be an asset to lead pack swimmers, as well as those toward the middle and back of the pack. They will provide direction, nourishment, encouragement, and security during what we expect to be an awesome day! Train hard.

HANDLERS' RESPONSIBILITIES excerpt from FINA Manual



In the past many swimmers have not relied to a great extent on their handlers. These swimmers have been successful in their efforts due to their ability to organize and understand their own requirements. However, events with stronger competition, longer distances and more open water bring added need for the best support for the swimmer. The following are guidelines for requirements of the handler; they are not necessarily pertinent to every swimmer. These requirements are:

- Knowledge of open water swimming is paramount. Experience in some form of open water or even surf swimming is an advantage.
- An understanding of the swimmer, his/her dislikes, his/her true ability along with the expertise to be everything the swimmer needs in the course of the event.

• The ability to organize all food, grease, blankets, seasickness tablets, sunscreens, caps, goggles. To prepare all with the least interference for the swimmer prior to the event. The swimmer's confidence in knowing that you have everything organized is important.

- An understanding of the ocean, lake or river waters, coupled with the ability to read tidal charts and to understand the effects of currents, winds and waves.
- Understanding the swimmer's bad times, and being able to bring them through these periods. A tolerance to nurse when needed and be cruel when necessary. Being able to adjust and change whatever is required to lift the swimmer. This understanding can be developed during workouts and events – swimmers' reactions will, of course, differ under different environmental conditions.
- Probably the most important method of knowing a swimmer's own handling of a swim is his/her stroke rating. All swimmers must, before undertaking an open water swim, know their comfort zone in relation to stroke rating. During training all swimmers should have swum in open water. From these swims stroke per minute readings should have been taken. During a race, the prime requisite to the swimmer is to know their stroke rating. As a reference point, between 76 and 88 strokes seems to be the comfort zone, depending on the size of the swimmer. Hypothetically, from your training, 83 strokes per minute would have a swimmer holding 5 minutes for 400 meters, 80/81 is down a bit to a possible 5 minutes 5 seconds, and 85/86 is too fast at around 4 minutes 55 seconds and must be slightly pulled back. Just those few strokes too early can be paid for dearly later on. However, coaches need to be aware that technique and stroke ratings depend very heavily on environmental conditions.
- Most importantly, a handler must protect the swimmer from swimming through water tainted by outboard motor fumes. Keep the swimmer away from fumes blowing across the water, and have the exhaust switched off on larger vessels where the exhaust protrudes on the side of the swimmer.
- Be aware of the advantage that can be gained by hiding a swimmer with the escort boat from other swimmers. A change in direction by one or the other can be the time that a break is made from another swimmer locked on to staying with your swimmer.
- Never follow the main tender boat when shore points can be sighted. Remember the ocean is a big place. A boat going ahead and being followed by the swimmer will have a zigzag course. The idea with land points is to keep the swimmer straight. Sight a tower, building, or hill and aim for that point. You should make adjustments for tide and note the direction of the flow. Every twenty minutes adjustments can be made.
- To check movement, look for anchored craft or buoys between you and the shore on either side of your swimmer, not ahead. By sighting just ahead of the fixed object you will be able to see your progress. Hopefully you will see a steady movement of the terrain behind the anchored object.
- If the progress is slow you must ascertain water movement due to the tide or river current. Water always moves fastest in the middle of the river. Shift to the shore if slow; if fast, find the best centre run to the next point, go well past any point to keep in the flow, hug the point, as there is a chance of being swung into the eddy.
- In the ocean you must find your best position. Hug the shore if possible. If not, check your tide chart for where the flow changes. You must also remember that the full thrust of a tide whether flood or ebb lasts around 2 to 2½ hours; the rest of a six hour tide time is made of building up or slowing down to the slack water period. There is no point in pushing your swimmer too far. Controlled swimming is most important at this stage. Tides, although charted etc., do not always go as written – storms a

hundred kilometers away can make tides run much longer than normal. By sighting etc. you should be able to see the tide change, and this is the time for encouragement for the swimmer.

- In open water, anchored boats will always, in still conditions, point into the water flow. The bow will point into the flow. In windy conditions an anchored boat will show similar wind direction. In wind and tide conditions you should ascertain the direction of tidal flow along with an expected variance caused by the wind. Always allow a little more up wind so that if you miss on the calculations your swimmer is not swimming directly into both tide and wind.

- If bad weather hits, protect your swimmer with the boat. Place the escort boat between the side the wind is coming from and your swimmer. You will be amazed how much difference it will make. It will protect from waves and swell.

- If weather comes from ahead, adjust your swimmer's style. Breathe further back and higher, throw hands high and over the waves, bring in a good two beat kick to keep high and for getting over the waves, increase swimmer's body rotation. Most swimmers should have trained in similar conditions and understand the different style requirements in these conditions.

- Know your swimmer's feeding requirements and stick rigidly to their wishes. Never allow or listen to new products or whatever someone recommends on the day. If it hasn't been tried, don't change. By all means try all you like in future training sessions. The tried formula is the accepted, change should never be allowed on the day of the race.

- A good handler never leaves their swimmer. It is total commitment for the whole period. You are part of the team. The handler's eye contact is absolutely continuous. Understanding the eyes is most important. If a swimmer is going to pass out, the first indication will be from the eyes. It is known for persons to be still swimming in an unconscious state.

- When the race begins you know where everything is and now the only worry you have is your swimmer. This isn't a pleasure cruise. For as long as the race/swim goes you stay with the swimmer the whole time. The swimmer is relying on you for every possible assistance. You must be in sight at all times providing the support to the swimmer.

- If on a boat or paddling a board or ski, remember that you're the eyes. You're up higher than the swimmer and he/she must follow you. Do not follow the swimmer, if the swimmer drifts off it's up to you to bring him/her back to you, do not go after the swimmer, make him/her aware that he/she must keep his/her direction on you. Imagine a swimmer keeps pulling to the left and the crossing is ten kilometers. By the time you are almost at the finishing point your swimmer will be heading for a right hand direction, not taking into account extra you may have covered by the handler continuing to follow the swimmer.

- When meeting up with your swimmer at farm shoal, please be aware of other swimmers in the water and give them the right of way. Sweep kayakers will be assisting in making sure that all swimmers find their kayak and this has a way of working itself out if everyone is patient and remains calm.

Spectator Information



The big day arrives and in addition to the massive logistics of the swimmers and support, there is the mass of spectators at both the start and finish to consider. Here is some information for the spectators to consider.

Gilbert Park

Spectators can drop by Gilbert Park to see their swimmers off on the buses as they leave. The excitement is starting to build at this point so feel free to make an appearance if you are an early riser, don't forget to hit the coffee shop on the way. Gilbert Park is located at the end of Concourse East in Brightwaters. Signs will be posted on Main Street on the day of the swim.

The Start

You can attend the start by driving to Robert Moses State Park and parking at the east end of field 5. Parking is free before 8 AM on weekdays. Please allow at least 30 minutes to walk to the start. You should take the boardwalk to the lighthouse and then down to the beach and head east until you hit a bunch of swimmer on the beach at a really early hour. We can't be missed. After the start you head back to the cars and drive back over to the finish!

The Finish

Parking at Gilbert Park is limited. Please follow directions of volunteers if parking inside the park. If parking on the street, please be considerate of the surrounding neighborhood, we come back every year and want to keep up the great relationship we have with the community. Swimmers will start coming in around 1 hour and 45 minutes after the start be arriving right up until the 4 hour mark. Awards and a group picture will start shortly after the cutoff is passed.

Gilbert Park

There will be portable toilets set up at the park as well as tables for t-shirts/hats and donations. Outdoor showers are also available although mostly used by the swimmers. **No dogs are allowed in Gilbert Park please.**

What to wear/bring

Dress for the weather, seems pretty simple but please consider how the weather will change over a 6-7 hour period if you are attending the start and the finish. Pants may sound like a good idea at 6 AM but you may regret that at noon on an August day, layers are always a good idea whenever outdoors. Fold out chairs can be a good idea if you will be at the park for a while but it can be a busy and exciting place so consider that when deciding how light to travel. Don't forget

the Camera and sunscreen! Food will not be provided for spectators so please bring a snack if you plan on being there for a while.

For the swimmer

Swimmers may want a change of clothes or something special to snack on upon arrival at Gilbert Park, check with your swimmers before the race.

Volunteers

Thank a volunteer, they make this happen and are doing it for the love of this event! Do your part and help us leave the park as we found it as well, thanks in advance on this one!

Cheer!

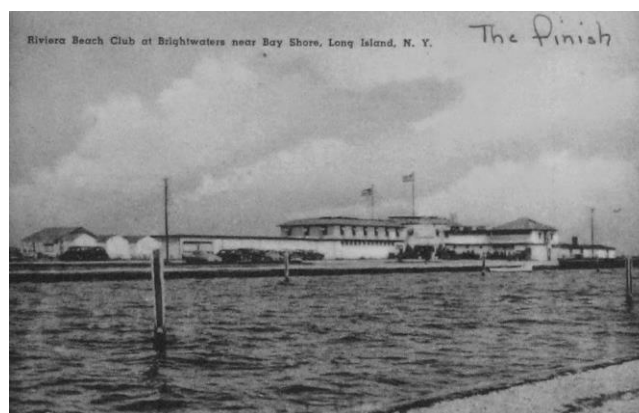
The swimmers can really hear you when they come in, give them a warm welcome as they arrive. It's no easy task to swim 5.25 miles and your encouragement and excitement when they finish makes a big difference! **Cheer loud, let them hear you!**

Remember the Hospice

Don't forget that this event is a fundraiser for a wonderful organization that depends on us to help support their work in the community. Please visit the table set up for donations and give generously in the name of you favorite swimmer!

A Bit of History.....

While the Cross Bay Swim dates back to 1927, Brightwaters has its origins back in 1910 when the T.B. Ackerson Company built the original community. The "Grand Venetian Waterway" was a key feature in the new community as it remains today. The current location of Gilbert Park at the end of Concourse East also has a long and storied past. Water Carnivals were held there starting in 1910 with short events held close to shore including the ever popular bathtub races. In the 1950's the Cross Bay Swim finished there at the no longer present Riviera Beach Club pictured below. So as you wander around Gilbert Park, think about all the wonderful history of the place and the swimmers that came before us! Pretty cool stuff!



Cross Bay Swim Top Ten List



Safety is priority one but here are some other helpful tips to help guide you to a great swim!

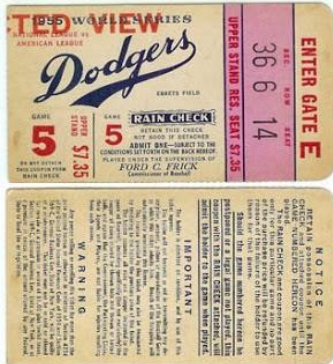
10. Don't forget your suit, goggles are optional but please wear a suit so we don't scare the fish! We also recommend Body Glide or Vaseline for those friction spots, salt water will do things to you that pool water never will. Make sure you lube up those armpits.

9. You have trained hard but don't worry if you don't peak on race day, race day magic will take care of the rest!
8. Use the shallows at the 2.5-mile mark to hydrate and recharge, rough seas ahead mate!
7. Don't wave at the Coast Guard unless you really need them! They may pull you out of the water by mistake and ruin your swim!
6. Pick your course carefully in the first mile since the current from the inlet pushes swimmers to the east. Sound tactics in the first mile will save you minutes at the finish. You must swim between the boat and the buoy at the first boat, it is mandatory.
5. Thank the swim committee and all the volunteers because they work extremely hard to make this wonderful event happen!
4. DON'T DRINK SPORTS DRINKS and lay off the salty snacks, you will get "grumpy gills" and pollute the bay! Don't worry, you will probably drink enough sea water to cover your sodium needs for a month! Sticking with water or coconut water is recommended. Try rinsing out your mouth before drinking at each rest stop.
3. Stay relaxed and never panic!!!
2. Remember we are doing this for a great cause. Support the Hospice through donations and obtaining sponsorships. Your efforts are very much appreciated!
1. Finish the last $\frac{1}{4}$ mile strong and really enjoy the moment! Remember to just keep swimming, just keep swimming, just keep swimming.... until you touch land, then head to the after party to celebrate! 50,000 people a year run the NYC Marathon but less than 600 people have ever completed the Cross Bay Swim! You have just accomplished something very very special!

The Great South Bay

The Great South Bay is one of the most amazing natural places anywhere. At one time it was the primary source of both Oysters and then hard shelled clams on the entire east coast of the United States. In 1976 the Great South Bay yielded a record 750,000 bushels of hard clams before the industry began its precipitous decline. Many of us remember those glorious days and hold hope that the bay will someday be returned to its full luster. Oysters no longer exist in the Great South Bay and Clam production has decreased 99% from its high water mark in 1976 although they are making a comeback due to the tireless efforts of many to conserve this important part of the ecosystem. The amazing beauty of the Great South Bay is sometimes hard to comprehend as is the case with things that are right in our backyards. The salty smell of a warm summer breeze and those awesome sunsets cannot be outdone.

The Best Seat in the House



What if you could jump in your way back machine and let's say go to see the New York Yankees play the Brooklyn Dodgers in game 5 of the 1955 World Series at Ebbets Field. I know this is somewhat arbitrary but if you're a baseball fan then you would probably think this is pretty cool. Realizing that tickets to a regular season game in 2012 to see the Yankees play could cost you up to \$2,500 each but in 1955 you could go to Ebbets Field to see the **World Series** for just \$7.35. That's still only \$68.02 in 2019 dollars which would probably only get you a hot dog and a soda today. Could you imagine!!!

Well it's sometimes hard to see a true treasure when it's staring you in the face because the pack mentality takes over and unless it costs a ridiculous amount it may not get a lot of attention. It's a rare breed that can take a different view at things and see what's truly valuable out there. These things exist even today if you look closely enough. One of my favorite examples is the Cape Cod Baseball League. You can keep your high priced tickets to see A-rod and Jeter, I'd rather go see future major league players who get paid nothing to play on the Cape where a great seat on the hill is yours for only a \$2 donation. It's baseball the way it should be!



can jump in one of those newfangled automobiles for a drive down the Southern State Parkway with Robert Moses for a visit to Jones Beach. Catch a ride from there on a clam boat with a local



finish that we will. They looked up at the FI Lighthouse exactly as we do at the start and the probably felt they same angst as well. It really does not get any more pure than this and it's really



I guess this brings me to my point. The Cross Bay Swim is probably the best kept secret on the planet. If you grew up on LI then you get this concept very quickly and if you didn't then it only takes one Cross Bay Swim to understand. The South Shore of Long Island has a wonderful and rich history tied closely to our immigrant roots and Ellis Island. From Ellis Island you can take a steamboat to Battery Park and the on to Coney Island for a swim in the saltwater pool at Steeplechase Park, which was the largest swimming pool in the world. From there you

can jump in one of those newfangled automobiles for a drive down the Southern State Parkway with Robert Moses for a visit to Jones Beach. Catch a ride from there on a clam boat with a local bayman and after picking up couple of bushels of clams and some blue crab you are at the FI Lighthouse for the start of the Cross Bay Swim. Whether it's 1927, 1950, 1975, 1999 or 2012 it still comes down to the human body, the Great South Bay and a 5 plus mile swim. They talk about the constant nature of baseball in our society but the Cross Bay Swim has it beat hands down. Those that have crossed the bay before us swam the same channels and over the same shoals and ran up the same beaches to the

finish that we will. They looked up at the FI Lighthouse exactly as we do at the start and the probably felt they same angst as well. It really does not get any more pure than this and it's really really old school at its best. So you can keep your \$2,500 dollar tickets to Yankee Stadium because this year **I'm going to the Cross Bay Swim**. Who knows, maybe in 50 years tickets to the top of the lighthouse for the start will go for \$25K. To top it all off it's for a great cause! This year the bay is all ours and it's one of the most beautiful hidden treasures on the planet. I hope is always stays that way!!!

Climb the Lighthouse to watch the Start



The Fire Island Lighthouse has offered to open the lighthouse for the swim start. The top of the lighthouse offers amazing views of the bay and a unique vantage point for the start of the swim. Spots are limited, please contact the lighthouse directly if interested. If you have never been up there I can tell you that the view is tremendous and you will have enough time to watch the swimmers for the first mile or so before climbing down and heading to the finish line. It's a great experience!!

By the way, the Labor Day 1927 Cross Bay Swim had over 2,000 spectators with 800 in boats following the race in the water. There were no bridges back then but the Lighthouse still beckoned. It will be nice to look back some day a long time from now and say "we were there" instead of saying "we wish"!!

About the tides

As most of you may already know tides are caused primarily by the gravitational pull of the Moon and to a lesser extent the Sun and other celestial bodies in the universe. The Earth and the Moon are attracted to each other, just like magnets are attracted to each other. The Moon tries to pull at anything on the Earth to bring it closer. But, the Earth is able to hold onto everything except the water. Since the water is always moving, the Earth cannot hold onto it, and the Moon is able to pull at it. So the gravitational pull of the Moon reaches down to our world, and this is nowhere more apparent than when looking at our oceans. The surface then juts out and upward in direction of the pull, sort of like a tractor beam with limited power. When the pull is strongest this is called high tide. And on the side of Earth opposite the Moon the energy caused by the Earth's rotation produces a high tide as well. Pretty amazing how the Moon's pull on one side can cause high tide on the opposite side of the Earth.

Each day, there are two high tides and two low tides. The ocean is constantly moving from high tide to low tide, and then back to high tide. The tide is considered "flooding" when it rises and "ebbing" when it falls. The periods of calm in between are when the ocean is full of what is called "slack water." There is about 12 hours and 25 minutes between the two high tides. The reason for this is that the Earth rotates on its axis once every 24 hours but the Moon is also orbiting the Earth although at a much slower rate. Each day the Moon orbits around the Earth just enough so that the Earth needs to rotate an extra 50 minutes in order to catch up to it. This factor is what causes the tides to occur at different times each day.

Spring Tides

When the Sun and Moon are aligned (full or new), there are exceptionally strong gravitational forces, causing very high and very low tides which are called spring tides, though they have nothing to do with the season.

Neap Tides

During the Moon's quarter phases the sun and Moon work at right angles, causing the bulges to cancel each other. The result is a smaller difference between high and low tides and is known as a neap tide. Neap tides are especially weak tides. They occur when the gravitational forces of the Moon and the Sun are perpendicular to one another (with respect to the Earth).

Perigee and Apogee

The Moon follows an elliptical path around the Earth which means that the distance that the Moon is from the Earth varies as it moves through its orbit. The closest the Moon comes to the Earth is called the perigee and occurs at a distance of approximately 356,400 kilometers. The point at which the Moon is farthest from the Earth is called the apogee. Tidal forces vary depending on how close the Moon is to the Earth with tide being more dramatic when the Moon is closer to the Earth. This little 8 percent change translates into 25 percent increase in the tide-producing ability of the Moon upon the Earth. If the lunar perigee occurs when the Moon is between the Sun and the Earth, it produces unusually high spring high tides. A topic for another day is the Proxigean Spring Tide. All I can say is that I wouldn't leave anything on the beach overnight!

Simulate the Event



With any distance event that pushes you into uncharted territory it is best to simulate as much as possible in advance. This will help to eliminate any unwanted surprises during your swim. The objective here is to break your swim and training into various components and ensure that each aspect has been worked into your preparations at some point. It is then ideal to do at least one last simulation 3-4 weeks from the swim which combines as many of the components in one training swim.

Open Water:

If you have never trained in open water then Cross Bay Swim day may not be what you plan. We highly recommend that all swimmers have experience in the open water and that means getting out there and training in it. If you live on Long Island then the Great South Bay is ideal and there are plenty of locations to go out and swim. My favorite spot is in Heckscher Park at Overlook Field 8 but any local beach is fine. If you are not in the area then do your best to find a body of water that is similar to the bay. Lakes are fine but salt water is better. If you swim in the ocean you may be happily surprised on race day to find the bay slightly warmer and calmer. **Please make sure you never swim alone.** While swimming you should try to work on various components of your technique including working with the currents, chop, and wind. Focus on relaxing in the water now that your visibility is decreased and just get comfortable. Swimming back and forth along the shore can simplify things as you can stay in shallow water for safety while still getting your training in.

Equipment:

You should be training as much as possible with the gear you will be using in the swim. Although you may get some odd looks swimming in your local pool with a wetsuit on, you should make sure you have logged enough time swimming with it if you plan on using one. Any problems with fit or unexpected friction points could be a major problem and working this out in advance is critical. If you are not using a wetsuit you should also be using your swimsuit in training to ensure comfort and fit. Goggles are another key piece of gear to train with. Changing at the last minute to a new pair of goggles may make your swim a frustrating series of stops to clear the leaks. You should expand this as needed to include contact lenses, ear plugs, Vaseline and anything else.

Nutrition:

Simulating your nutrition leading up to your swim is also a good idea. It would be risky to go out and eat something out of the ordinary the night before the swim as it may not sit well with you and negatively impact your swim. Stick with food you have used during training both before and during the swim. You can do what you want afterward but be warned that your body may take a little time to recover from all the sea water so choose wisely following the event as well. If you have carbohydrate loaded well then you will not need to stuff yourself on the morning of the swim. Make sure you eat something but don't get crazy and leave your body digesting a huge meal as you enter the water.

Glycogen burn:

The average human body can hold approximately 2,000 calories of stored glycogen. If you have not fully carbo-loaded this amount may be somewhat less. The distance of the swim and the amount of time spent swimming will determine whether you can complete the swim with your stored glycogen or if you will go into glycogen debt. Simulating this in training is critical as well since the point you may go into glycogen debt is typically toward the end of the swim. This is basically what it means to hit the wall in a marathon and it can be difficult to get through if you have not trained for it. You should be simulating this by doing long swims on a weekly or every two week basis. The idea is to get to glycogen debt so you can train your body to burn fat for energy instead of glycogen and so that you can get comfortable in this zone. One way to accelerate this is to intentionally **not** load up on carbohydrates prior to your long swims so that you go into debt quicker. If you plan on taking more than 3 hours to complete the swim then plan to hit the wall toward the end. Please refer to the post on open water panic as this will probably be the critical point in your swim to remain calm and relaxed as your body converts from burning carbohydrates to burning fat and amino acids. You need to be confident in your fitness so that you do not get worried with bonking so quickly in the pool during these training swims. Proper carbohydrate loading and tapering prior to the swim will give you an added boost and your body will be well prepared to be burning your fat stores.

Kayaker:

You and your kayaker should train together if possible. This one can be difficult given that in some cases you may not meet your kayaker until the day of the swim but do your best. If you have been arranged a kayaker that is new to you then try to talk on the phone prior to the swim and discuss the various details in advance.

Family:

Many of you will have family at the swim cheering you on. You may want to walk them through the day ahead of time and tell them all the details on where to be and when. Once race day comes you will need to focus on swimming and leave the logistics of your family getting to the right place to someone else. Taking care of this ahead of time can save you some stress the day before or on the day of the swim. I have had my kayaker use a small 14 channel hand radio in my past swims with success. Give one to your family and one to your kayaker if you want them to be able to stay in touch with your current location. If you do this you may want to pick a couple of channels in case someone else is using your first choice.

General Logistics:

Make sure you have your schedule worked out for the days leading up to the swim and for swim day. If you are not sure where something is located then be sure to look on a map or take a drive to be sure. No need to risk not getting there because did not take 5 minutes to look.

Pulling It All Together:

My recommendation is that you go out 3-4 weeks ahead of the swim and pull as many of these components together as possible. The more components the better. This will leave you a little bit of time prior to your taper to make gear adjustments or to tweak your nutrition. Please refer to the post on panic if something does not work well in your simulation swims. Relaxing and staying calm can fix many challenges you will encounter and it is no different during your training.

Plan for a problem:

One last thing to plan on is that something may not go as planned on race day. Usually something minor pops up and you should just try to roll with it. Remember to stay calm and safe!

Tapering



As is standard practice for endurance events, your training should include 1-2 weeks of tapering where you rest your body in preparation for the event to follow. The following post will give you some facts that will help you with your taper. Many swimmers fail to realize that one of the most important aspects of training is the taper phase leading up to the swim. Reducing weekly mileage during the final week is vitally important so that you will be fully recovered from previous workouts while at the

same time, be completely rested for the big event. The taper period is the time that spans the period just prior to the event right up to Thursday night before the race.

Physical Preparation

Cut back on the distance and intensity of your training during the week prior to the Cross Bay Swim, eliminating long and hard efforts. You will need to make a decision whether you wish to take either/both Wednesday or Thursday as a complete rest day(s) prior to the swim. Listen to your body. Remember, there are no workouts the week prior to the swim that will enhance your preparedness for the race. An important rule of thumb is "Less is Best", particularly if you are feeling either physically or mentally tired and/or your muscles are fatigued/achy, etc. Keep stretching as much as possible during the couple of weeks prior to the swim.

The Week Prior to Your Cross Bay Swim

As you reduce your training during the last week, realize that you will not be burning as many calories. Thus, you may gain one or two pounds if you don't cut back a bit on the quantity of your servings early in the week. Use care in selecting foods to eat during this time period, aiming for nutritious and healthy items rather than snack/high fat products. Hydrate well the week before and in particular, during the carbohydrate loading period (three days prior to the swim). Research indicates that carbohydrates convert to glycogen more effectively when accompanied with the consumption of water. This is the time when you may gain a couple of pounds, but don't worry about it. This will be your fuel during the swim! If you are traveling out town, be sure to pack healthy snack foods you may wish to eat leading up to the swim. Eliminate the need to search for a grocery store that stocks your favorite foods. Carbohydrate loading should begin three days before. Choose foods for lunch and dinner that are high in carbohydrates (e.g., pasta, potatoes, rice, etc.). Don't neglect fruits, vegetables, and some protein sources however. Try to really scale back on fats during this time.

The Evening Prior to Your Swim

Be sure to eat carbohydrate products that have been "tried and proven" during your training period. Keep pasta sauces simple, avoiding high fat varieties (e.g., Alfredo, pesto, etc.). Avoid eating lots of salad items and vegetables (roughage) as these may prove to be troublesome on race day and can cause digestive problems. Stick to water during the evening meal. Because coffee and tea contains caffeine, these products may make it difficult for you to fall asleep easily.

Keep in mind that caffeine and alcoholic beverages are diuretics and can dehydrate you prior to the event.

Experimentation

Don't try anything new the week prior to, **or during the swim.**

Rest

Aim to get lots of sleep the week prior to the swim. Try to go to bed early Wednesday night and wake up very early Thursday morning. This will enable you to get into the rhythm of preparing to wake up early Friday morning. The most important night for sleep is Wednesday evening as many people find it difficult resting/sleeping soundly the night before the event. If you don't get a restful night's sleep Thursday, that's fine as long as you sleep well Wednesday. After your Thursday evening meal, try not to think about the swim anymore. Instead, watch television, read (about something other than swimming), or find something else restful to do until you turn in for the evening. Prior to retiring, have two alarm systems set to wake you up (alarm clock, wake-up call, watch alarm setting, etc.). While this may seem a bit excessive, the key here is not to leave anything to chance. Wake up early enough to eat, make visit(s) to the bathroom, and take care of anything you feel the need to do so as not to feel rushed. The idea in the few hours before the swim is to relax as much as possible and stay off your feet.

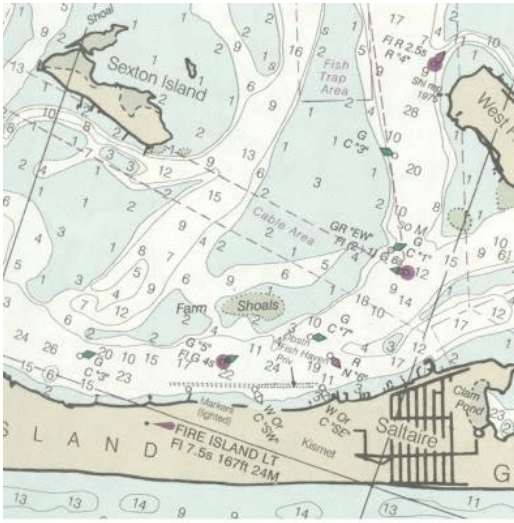
Psychological Issues and Concerns

As you taper, concentrate on reading books, magazine articles, or other materials that will provide you with motivation and inspiration. Take care of any anxieties and concerns in the weeks prior to the swim. Preparation is the best strategy to reduce or eliminate stress and anxiety, all the more reason to have completed those key long swims in the weeks prior to the event. Remember that it is normal to be tense or nervous prior to an event. Even the most seasoned swimmers experience these feelings. Stay away from individuals who are excessively stressed out or are negative. Don't let these people affect your state of mind. Look at the course map and learn as much about the depth, currents, channels, wind patterns and other features of the bay as possible.

Race Strategy and Goal Setting

The evening prior to the swim is NOT the time to plan or think about your race strategy. In the weeks prior to the swim, think about three goals you'd be interested in accomplishing for your crossing: (1) an easily obtainable goal, (2) a realistic yet moderately challenging goal, and (3) an ultimate goal. Determine a strategy to achieve the ultimate goal, but build in flexibility in your plan to achieve a less ambitious goal if things don't pan out the way you had planned. Above all, be realistic.

Mile 1 Tactics



The first mile of the swim can be a little tricky especially if this is your first time swimming the Cross Bay Swim. The swim is coordinated with the incoming flood tide so you will need to plan for this while swimming and mile 1 differs from the rest of the swim in that the flood tide is coming at you more from the side than from behind. If you are not careful it could push you off course to the east. Your best bet is usually to sight toward the east end of Sexton Island in order to stay on course and adjust on your approach to the first 2 marker boats although this year we are starting further east on the beach so choose your sighting point carefully using Sexton island as a reference point. There is a lot of commotion at the start and a lot of boat and swimmers to obstruct your view of the markers so be patient and use Sexton Island as a reference. The swim committee will have boats placed in the first mile to help guide swimmers through the shoals and this will be reviewed in

more detail at the pre-meeting. As mentioned there are shoals (shallows) in the first mile and this is where your kayaker will be waiting for you. You will need to walk across "farm" shoal as it is only about 2 feet deep. The shoal has been there for over 100 years and has been found referenced by name dating back to 1902 so don't think it will go away anytime soon. Make sure to check your progress through the first mile so that you remain on course through the first 2 boats. The swim committee prefers that you swim through each marker boat and give your number so you can be tracked across, this may be mandated this year to ensure that swimmers go the full distance. As a note, fighting with the currents will just drain your energy so plan carefully and just go with the flow!

The first mile can be very difficult for a first time Cross Bay Swimmer, there have been multiple cases over the years of swimmers struggling in this first mile and deciding to pull out. These are often younger swimmers and this story has repeated itself going all the way back to the 1950s. For those swimmers, I urge you to take a deep breath and calm yourself down. Don't think of the swim in its entirety, just slow down your pace and keep on swimming one stroke at a time until you get into a groove. It is very easy to go out too fast and lose your composer in the first 15 minutes of the swim. Don't worry so much about everyone else, just swim your pace and focus on your plan and strategy. You are capable of more than you can imagine so just dig down and find the mental toughness to push on. It can take a mile or two to get in a good rhythm so just push through any initial doubts and give yourself a chance to settle in and swim. Breath in - breath out - breath in - breath out..... Good luck and we'll see you on farm shoal!

First time swimmers who are at all concerned about the start and linking up with their kayakers will be given the option of having their kayakers start with them from the beach. This will be covered at the pre-meeting, please only take advantage of this option if necessary or instructed to do so, having too many kayaks present at the start can create other difficulties that will outweigh the benefit and increased safety we are trying to generate. If not starting with your kayaker from the beach, please do not be concerned about finding them on the shoal, there will be multiple sweep kayakers to assist if need and you will be with your kayaker heading across before you know it.

Race Day Magic



Yes my fellow Cross Bay Swimmers, race day magic is real! This may sound like a lot of hocus pocus but I am sure many of you can testify that this is indeed true. For those who may be new to this concept, race day magic is this amazing thing that shows up usually when you need it most (unlike most other things). As endurance athletes we are constantly pushing ourselves to go levels that may seem impossible. We toil through grueling training regimens while at constant risk of injuries and other setbacks that test our will in those many dark and cold mornings. We do all of this while trying to peak just in time for a race that leaves us at the mercy of the weather , tides, and a myriad of other factors that can conspire against us. You

could almost say that there is more than a little magic needed just to get to the starting line. It does not matter if you are swimming the bay in 2 or 4 hours because it's all about coming up with a pace that will push us to our limits and allow us to reach the finish line in our personal target time based on our individual fitness.

The best explanation that I have seen is that race day magic is that place where the spirit and the body synchronize for the briefest of moments to allow us to go beyond what would normally be possible. If you have been there then you understand what a special gift this is and how few people you meet every day have experienced it. Imagine you are in the fifth mile of the Cross Bay Swim as you push to reach the beautiful Sigrid at the 5 mile mark. You may be starting to tire and the chop is picking up and maybe your stomach is not feeling so good (aka grumpy gills). The voices in your head start talking to each other and the conversation is not the one you want to be having. You may be 20 yards off the lead or 3+ hours into it and trying to make the 4 hour cut but either way it's time to make a decision. The thoughts of all the training start you on your way toward resisting the fatigue. After all your work and struggle you do not want to come this far and let it slip. You may think of a loved one, children, parents or some other special reason why you have chosen to do what so few have done before and then it happens. Something clicks deep inside you and out pops that race day magic. I have no idea where it comes from but it's for real. It feeds your soul and gives your body that little extra strength it needs to get you to the finish. I guess it is there inside us all along but I can tell you that if you ever go to this place where Race Day Magic lives you will never forget it! I wish you all a Cross Bay Swim with calm seas, a favorable tide, and a whole lot of Race Day Magic!!!!

Finish Strong

When you are swimming the 4th and 5th mile of the Cross Bay Swim it can tend to feel like land just never gets any closer. Rest assured that it is actually getting closer and you will soon be on the beach celebrating with family and friends. I have always found the 4th mile to most challenging mentally because you it is where you can start to tire but you are still far enough away from the finish to have your mind play games with you. Once you hit the 5th mile you can start to feel the finish line getting closer which usually brings a fresh focus to your stroke as you push to the finish line.



As we get deeper into mile 5 we must locate the finish line and head for the beach. This can be a little tricky as the shoreline details can be hard to see especially if there is some chop on the day of the swim. Your kayaker will have a much better vantage point and should help you keep on course as they should be doing the entire swim. There will be a tall masted sail boat at the 5 mile mark that will help you find your way. One of the things I like to do as we leave on the ferry in the morning is to take a look back at the finish line in Brightwaters and refresh my mind on what the Brightwaters shoreline looks like. I asked Bob to get me some pics of the finish area from out in the bay which he sent along and I am including below for you to look at before the swim. Take a look below.....

You can expect to see something looking like this marking the end of the 5th mile, what a great feeling when you swim past! This photo is from shore so it will be a little more difficult to spot from the water with the shoreline in the background but I'm sure you will find it, we always do!



This picture is what the finish line looks like from about a 1/2 mile out, as you can see it can be very difficult to pick out the beach. The finish is in the center of the picture, note the white house just to the right of the beach. Kayakers take note.

One last point especially for you new swimmers, remember how far you are from shore when deciding to make your final push for the finish. If you think you can push hard for that last ¼, ½ or full mile then go for it. There will be a strong urge to sprint once you pass the boat at mile 5 but you still have a full ¼ mile to go so you may want to hold last big push just a little bit if you are starting to tire after swimming 5 miles. In the end it is your call but try to translate the distance into pool laps and think about how hard you can push in that setting when determining your final swim to the finish. For reference it is approximately 18 laps in a 25 yard pool to get in from the 5 mile mark (lap = one pool length, not a round trip).

Important Swim Procedures

All swimmers must check-in the morning of the swim at the committee tables at the Fire Island Lighthouse dock. If you are arriving on Fire Island by any means other than the Fire Island Ferries, you must check-in.

The Swim timeline is very tight. It is important to check-in and move to starting positions. Toilets are available at the Fire Island Lighthouse checkpoint, just south of our starting point and reachable by a new walkway from the beach.

First time swimmers and slower swimmers will be allowed to keep their kayakers on the beach behind them at the start. This allows them to avoid the navigational challenge of the first half mile and provide a better sense of security for us all. The other kayakers will be located on Farm Shoal, about 0.3 mile offshore where they can rejoin their swimmers.

We will alert swimmers who are swimming too slowly. Any swimmer who reaches the three mile mark in 2 hours and 30 minutes or more will be warned about the pace. The Swim has a strict four hour limit, and we must ask anyone in the water beyond the time limit to be picked up and taken to shore.

Finally, you or a representative are required to attend the pre-Swim briefing at the Bay Shore YMCA. We will cover all of our procedures, and answer questions. The date and time of the meeting will be communicated as plans are finalized.