

OBSERVERS REPORT

MARK CROWTHER

6th August 2003

We were the first to start (just) at 0439 , just in front of Orin McCluskey with Aegean Blue and the RAF team with Sea Satin . Chris Osborn and Seafarer also started 10 minutes behind Sea Satin .

It is a beautiful morning and Mark Starts off with a steady 56 strokes per minute .

0536 He has a Lucozade Low Calorie! sports drink summer fruits flavour with the feeding pole left on board from Nick Sidlenick at the weekend .

There are no waves , but a bit of swell mostly kicked up from the huge tankers going up and down the shipping lanes .

0615 A Massive cruise ship passes us on the portside on its way into Dover Harbour

0645 Seafrance 'Rodin' passes portside only 500m away , Sandy takes a few photos with Mark in the shot .

0715 Eddie gives the girls a position update with the chart

0734 Pauline tries to feed Mark , but he looks at his watch and indicates there is another 5 minutes yet !

0739 Another Lucozade drink , this time lemon body fuel , with a muscle ease in it , the fruit bar took him a long time to chew , Mark said he was pleased it was calming down as he had been a bit ill back there , but it was only rough from the swell from big boats

0839 LOTS and lots of weed around , the weather must have been good the last few days for this to clump together like this . Mark is having trouble with his hat , so he takes it off along with his goggles , but loses his nose clip in the process . he take a sea sickness pill alongside his rice drink , and also gets a spare nose clip. He took a long time to sort himself out on this feed .

0909 Mark has more goggle trouble

0939 Mark says he feels like crap , definitely not himself. We tell him he is swimming very well , he agrees with us that it is a great day , just a shame he is not feeling so good

0950 Seal pops up his head twice to have a look , he is only about 20 m away , Mark does not spot him

0958 Toilet stop

1009 Normal Lucozade , he did not want the peaches that were offered , told him the seal had come to check him out .

1025 'Dawn Merchant' passes us 1/2 mile off the starboard side

1030 He stops , and needs encouragement to get going again

1039 Lucozade and fruit bar , takes a long time , says he is cramping up .

1109 Rice drink (3 mins) Pauline tells Mark he is doing really well .and to concentrate on abdominals next

11.39 Lucozade (low Calorie) we stick in 3 scoops of maxim to give him a lift . Mark asked for Panadol and said it wasn't his day , we told him it was lovely and to get going .

12.09 Peaches , he was not quite so negative this time , but had problems with his goggles for the next 20 minutes

12.34 Mark is heaving , but not bringing up anything

12.39 Summer fruits flavour lucozade

13.09 Tea with sugar and milk , did not want fruit , said he was going to hurl again . we told him we had spare goggles ready in case he wanted to change them

13.25 Big heave session , we gave him plain water to hopefully flush everything through

13.39 Lucozade lemon and Maxim

14.09 Lucozade maxim and a painkiller

14.39 Summer fruits lucozade , peaches and neurofen . He saw Aegean Blue and asked if it was the other swimmer

15.09 Lemon Lucozade , Mark said he had cramp badly and started swimming much much slower

15.39 Powerade lemon and hot water , said could not keep anything else down , legs were all cramped up ... I said its OK you are nt using them so ignore the pain .

16.09 Summer fruits body fuel and maxim

16.29 Tropical fruit (dried) no drink

16.49 Summer fruit Lucozade and maxim

17.05 I want out .. NO you are too close to get out now

17.09 Says he is in a bad way , but knew we fed him late as he had looked at his watch , so he knows what is going on

17.29 Summer Fruits Lucozade

17.34 Eddie has a word with Pauline and Sandy , says he is not going in anymore .. will stick with him for as long as it takes , but Mark was looking very tired and would have to finish in the dark

17.49 Summer fruits with EXTRA maxim

18.05 Seems to be putting something together now , going for it

18.09 Another boost of maxim , says he really wants to have a crack at it GOOD ! that is the most positive thing he has said all day , he gets his head down and carries on swimming again

Mark has really got the bit between the teeth now , he has seen the cliffs and is stroking well .

18.29 Said no I don't want a drink I'm OK. ' musice to my ears' says Eddie

18.39 Made him have another drink with maxim in as he keeps stopping .

19.09 Summer fruits and maxim

19.39 Lemon lucozade and maxim

20.09 Refused a drink , will leave it and see how he gets on

20.15 Summerfruits and LOADS of maxim , we want to make sure he got enough fuel

20.40 Maxim and Summerfruit flavour lucozade

We can now see the cardinal buoy , the lights of Calais are stretching out in front of us and getting ever closer , the CA4 is only 2 miles ahead .

21.09 Maxim and Citrus fruits

We hear over the radio that Aegean Blue has aborted the swim . We obviously don't tell Mark , but become increasingly concerned about the fact that the wind is getting up and it is getting ever darker . Mark has a flashing light tied to the back of his goggles , but sometimes we are struggling to see him . We keep him going for another 2 hours , and see if the tide turning pushes him into shore , it doesn't , so we make the hard decision to pull Mark out , conditions were getting more dangerous and as we were not making any progress towards shore it was the safe thing to do , especially as the wind was blowing the boat away from Mark , and we kept losing sight of him .

A GREAT EFFORT MARK , if the wind had kept off I am sure we could have nudged you in , hopefully you will be back to give it another go .. the Channel is not going anywhere !!!!

All you have to do is keep moving your arms .. AND LEGS !!

ALISON STREETER MBE

OFFICIAL OBSERVER