

## Thoughts on training for SPEED

### Mike Oram

Dear Ahelee,

Here is an extract from an e-mail I have just replied to Phil Sacaborough reference Suzanne.

----- We have 20 large files on the shelf here with all the swim records for Lance and myself and the other pilots that have worked for us over the years (Graham Pique - Bob Brown - David Ford - Emma Ruston to name a few)- think we have done a combined total of 500 /600 swims since 1982, will count them all one day.

They are full of memories and information that show the trend and development of Channel swimming over the past 25 years. I remember a lot of incidents and people that have enlightened or changed the swimming scene and have lots of stories that I could tell but ---

Yes Suzanne did a lot while she was over here - she was a great girl and a great swimmer. But then again you all are. ( not all great girls some of you are boys).

Another point you might be interested in knowing is that girls are usually better at swimming the Channel than the males. Some say it is because they have more body fat - I think differently.

From my observations girls swim for themselves and know their capabilities. It is bloody hard to convince them to go on when they want to get out - (hi Marcy & Alison) - It took a lot of effort to get Alison to do the third leg of her 3 way and I had no chance of getting her to do a 4th (although she was at her peak at that time and I thought she could have swum back -even though it would not have been easily). She had done what she wanted and just got out.

Phil Rush however caused no problems at all we just "edged" him on. He broke 6 out of 7 records on his 3 way swim and might have got the fastest time on the first leg had we not slowed him down (his first leg was 8 hours 5 mins and the record was 7.46 then). When he finished his third leg and swam back to the boat we told him he had to do the 4th as the weather was right. He just continued swimming towards England (complaining he was hungry). We stopped him after about 100 yards as we had run out of throat sweets and safety wise it was not a good idea to carry on with his throat problem.

His swim was the beginning of us carrying mouthwash and promoting it's use to stop the swimmers throat's swelling up. Phil had developed a throat problem (it was swelling up and upsetting his breathing) and we had been dissolving throat pastels in water to keep him going on his third leg.

His swim just shows how men have an "ego thing" that keeps them going until they drop (Hi Tim).

Another tip for all you potential swimmers. Include mouth wash in your goodies box and try it in training - but make sure it is well diluted otherwise it can cause problems rather than solve them.

Before you ladies tear me to pieces for my comments I can confirm that some of you do have ego and some of you just carry on believing in yourselves until you drop. One of the bravest and courageous swims I remember was another young lady from San Francisco who swam until she dropped. I had to fish her out of the water (it was not a nice day) suffering from cold and exhaustion. She was very quiet when we lifted her onto the boat and this concerned me so I kept talking to her and asked what was the matter.

She went all weepy and apologised to me for letting the boat and my reputation down by failing.

In those days we use to say to the swimmers at the start of the swim "Just remember you are only the swimmer we have a reputation to keep up. Don't let the boat and us down - swim until you can walk ashore" and often fitted in another comment if the swimmers asked about getting out.

That was - "If I think you need to get out then out you will come - if you want to get out before then no problem - just swim to the back of the boat and tell me 3 times you have failed. " Never had anyone do that.

We have never used either of those sentences after that swim.

When you see so many different swimmers and so many different ways of training it makes you realise that everyone has to find their "own way".

Sort your own training pattern out. Select the information that suites you. Believe in yourselves and most of all "talk to yourself".

Remember "You can tell lies to any one else but you must never lie to yourself."

Just ask a few simple questions after each training session.

Did I do my best?

Did I enjoy it?

Did I push myself hard enough?

And last, best of all; Do I deserve a day off?

Mike