

Shark Island Swim

The Shark Island Swim was held on Sunday, 17th March 1996 and was again a huge success with an increase of 120 swimmers taking our swim number to 546.

Once again the seas were kind to us with calm seas and a nice sunny day. The increase in numbers of swimmers is testament to the work put in by the Swim Committee with expanded Media Coverage in Metropolitan Suburban Newspapers.

The Sunday started with 260 Prepaid Entries. With the help of our Ladies they easily coped with the 286 swimmers who entered on the day. This puts pressure on our Computer Committee of Chris Stephenson and Kelly Hollingdale who had to enter these swimmers' names into the computer. Much to their credit they were able to have all these swimmers' names on computer before the race finished.

John Wilson, Bill Stafford, Ken O'Donnell, Frank Doran and other Club Members organised the Start and Finish Area. The Beach Area was a picture with the flags which were kindly supplied by Cronulla Plaza as well as the sponsors' banners adding interest and colour.

Bruce Breadner, Greg Hewett, Kevin Maughan and I.R.B. Captain Robert Walker with the help from the Beach Inspectors and Robert's crewman were responsible for the laying of the swim course. Geoff Forshaw surveyed the course once again to have the distance of the swim at 2.3 kms. With some 18 large buoys to lay the swim course people worked nonstop to have the swim course ready by 9.30 a.m. This gave the swimmers a chance to walk around the promenade and have a look at the course layout.

The Water Safety was organised by Bob Johnson and Paul Duff. Many of the Club Board and Ski Competitors and Paddlers assisted. Boat Captain Col Tatham and three

of his Boat crews were on hand together with our I.R.B. crews. The Offshore Rescue Boat and crew was organised by Ron Camelleri. Our Water Safety was excellent. This is the most important aspect of any Ocean Swim, especially a swim of this distance.

With many swimmers still arriving Sue Ezzy and her women helpers were coping well. At 9.30 a.m. our announcer Allan Hanson, who does a sterling job on these swim days, asked the swimmers to assemble on the promenade in front of the Monro Room Balcony. Bill Stafford then outlined the swim course to the swimmers who were then called to the starting line on the beach where our starter, Sutherland Shire Mayor Lorraine Rodden, got the big field of swimmers on its way. It was a fantastic spectacle to see 546 swimmers entering the water. With the race underway Ron Smith had the task of organising the timing and finish. The timing group, made up of Club Members, was soon ready on the timing and recording tables.

The first swimmer to cross the finish line was Daniel McLellan who was successful in winning his 6th Shark Island Swim with Natasha Bowron, a 14 year old from Wanda Surf Club, winning the women's category.

Unfortunately one of our major turning buoys had drifted while the race was in progress making the swim approximately 3 kms. Daniel's time was 32 minutes and 26 seconds. The last swimmer took 96 minutes and 8 seconds to complete the course, a gutsy swim.

The Club Members who were on the B.B.Q. had the

Sausage Sandwiches ready for sale and the refreshments were served in the Ballroom. Mick and Jenny O'Connor sold out of T-Shirts. The Presentation was held in the Clubroom Ballroom and was a success.

The swim is becoming an event our Surf Club can be proud of with swimmers coming from all over the state and this year we also had swimmers from Victoria and even one competitor who flew over from Perth just to compete on Sunday and who then flew home the next day.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all Club Members and Wives who were such a wonderful help on this day. Your help in making this swim one of the Premium Ocean Races is much appreciated.

I would also like to thank Bill Eady for all his help on and prior to the race day. Thank you also to our Referee on the day, Greg Allum.

A special thank you to our Sponsors, Best Fresh Farm Markets Cronulla and Caringbah and Orix Australia as your kind sponsorship helped us raise much needed funds for Surf Life Saving equipment.

Once again the Swim Committee organised a wonderful day, and it is to their credit that their commitment has made this swim a wonderful success.

My thanks to: Bruce Breadner, Frank Doran, Sue Ezzy, Allan Hanson, Greg Hewett, Kelly Hollingdale, Kevin Maughan, Ken O'Donnell, Ron Smith, Bill Stafford, Chris Stephenson, John Wilson.

John Hollingdale, Convenor.

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