

GREATER LENGTHS



GREATER LENGTHS NEWSLETTER

The MSABC newsletter *Greater Lengths* is published four times during the year.

June 15 September 15
December 15 March 15

Our short news bulletins with important updates and approaching deadlines are published 1-2 times each month.

Submissions from the membership are welcome and encouraged. Submissions must be non-commercial in nature and must be word-processed.

Submit your article, photos, news, and ideas to Linda:
communications@msabc.ca

Find us online: msabc.ca



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Welcome back to the new season of swimming. You will notice that there are a few changes this year. Our new registration system is up and running. I hope swimmers found it relatively painless to register and sign waivers this year. We already have a couple of swim meets scheduled for this season, including one at Vernon's new 50M pool. We're excited to host you over Valentine's weekend February 13 and 14, 2027. Currently, we are looking for a club to host our 3-day wrap up meet (AKA the MSABC Provincials) in conjunction with our AGM in April—is your club interested? We have experienced Meet Managers and Officials ready to support you. Send me an email if your team might be interested.

MSABC has acquired Liability Insurance for all its members through a commercial insurance company this year. Please contact me if your pool requires a Certificate of Insurance (COI) form and let me know if there is anything special they require on the form.

As always, enjoy your swimming and I hope to see you all at one of our meets this year.

John Holmwood, MSABC President (president@msabc.ca)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

In this issue, we highlight several MSABC members who completed memorable open water swims this summer.

- My First Open Water Adventure (Sharon from Royal Masters)
- Three Generations Across the Lake (Natalie & Evan from WR Wave)
- Eat Ice Cream and Swim (Melanie from Nanaimo Ebbsides)
- Swimmers Conquer the English Channel (Kylie & Robynne from Vernon)
- Sunshine Coast Adventure: 4 Days in Open Water (Stewart from Coast)

Relax and read about these adventures and start planning your open water adventures for next summer. For open water resources, go to msabc.ca/openwater

INTRODUCING YOUR 2026-2027 MSABC BOARD

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PUT IT ON YOUR CALENDAR

Put these MSABC meets on your calendar! Sadly, there will not be an EBSC meet this year--instead, take your flamingo energy to Vernon for a romantic Valentines weekend!

North Shore Masters
Hollyburn Pool
October 17, 2026

Vernon Winter Splash
Vernon Active Living Centre
February 13 & 14, 2027

Chilliwack March Madness
Chilliwack Landing Leisure Centre
March 2027

MSABC Wraps It Up
Talk to us if you'd like to host!
April 2027

MSABC CLUBS/TEAMS REGISTRATION FUN • FITNESS • FRIENDSHIP

Registration for teams is open. So far, 23 MSABC teams have signed up. Be sure your team is one of them! Your team must belong to MSABC to be eligible for all MSABC benefits including meets, clinics, special events and challenges. \$25 fee for teams; \$25 per swimmer; coaches and officials are free. Team Registrars are invited to sign up now on our MSABC Swimtopia website (msabc.swimtopia.com)

Swimmers: After your team has signed up, your registrar will invite you to "register" and sign waivers on the team Swimtopia site.

SPIRIT BEARS: INDEPENDENT SWIMMER REGISTRATION

MSABC has created a special new group for independent and unattached MSABC swimmers.* Welcome to the Spirit Bear Swimmers. Your registration entitles you to participate in all MSABC activities as well as access to our News Bulletins and quarterly Newsletters. Register now on the Spirit Bears page: spiritbears.swimtopia.com.

*Previously known as
Dogwood swimmers.



FUN MSABC CHALLENGES

CELEBRATING FUN, FITNESS, AND FRIENDSHIP

Each season, our Awards and Recognition committee gets together to dream up new challenges for all Masters swimmers across the province—this year we are expanding our programs to include open water and fitness swimmer challenges. Be sure to read the monthly MSABC News Bulletins for regular Challenge updates and how you can participate. All MSABC swimmers including our new Spirit Bear Swimmers are eligible. At the end of the season, we send out special MSABC trinkets and swim caps to those participating on a regular basis.

Our MSABC fun Monthly Challenge theme for the 2026-2027 season is **Either/Or**. Each month, we will have several **Either/Or** challenges. Your team can get together and decide which challenge they'd like to tackle and send in a photo, video, or social media link related to the theme (tag [#mastersswimmingbc](#) on IG and/or FB or send to communications@msabc.ca).

Send in your entries by the 5th of the following month (i.e. by October 5th for the September challenge).



Vernon already sent in several September photos and videos, they titled this one, "Masters power, from the hot tub, after our first work out of the year."

MSABC MONTHLY CHALLENGE: SEPTEMBER

For September, the **Either/Or** Challenges are:

- **Truth & Reconciliation Recognition** (Sept. 30); **OR**
- **Talk Like A Pirate Day** (Sept. 19th); **OR**
- **Celebrate Your Coaches** (**Coaches Week**: Sept 14-20); **OR**
- **Biggest cannonball** to celebrate a new swim season! (capture it in slo-mo!)

We love when the whole team takes on the challenge together (shout out to Westshore Masters and Ravensong for their very creative entries each year). We also accept entries from individual team members and Spirit Bears.

MSABC Caps: participate in 5 of 8 months

Fun trinkets: participate in 3 of 8 months.

Super prizes: new this year, enter all 8 months (Sept-April) for a secret super prize.

OCTOBER

For October, the **Either/Or** Challenges are:

- **Celebrating Thanksgiving** (Oct. 12); **OR**
- **World Swim Day** – anything goes in the pool! (Oct. 22); **OR**
- **Halloween** – something spooky (Oct. 31); **OR**
- **Twisted Tuesday/Silly Sunday** – send us videos of crazy combo swim strokes/drills/games (Any Sunday or Tuesday in October)

NEW STORIES

In this issue, we are highlighting open water stories. We also have two stories from swimmers who received an MSABC bursary in support of their participation at National level meets.

For our next issue in December, we'd love to hear about special friendships you've made through swimming.

Do you have a story that you'd like to share? We'd love to hear about it. Send in your ideas and work with our editorial team to develop your story for our next issue. Send a note to communications@msabc.ca

MY FIRST OPEN WATER ADVENTURE

SHARON WYATT

ROYAL MASTERS SWIM CLUB

Four years ago, Sharon decided to learn to swim. This year, she decided to jump into open water swimming and signed up for the Osoyoos Across the Lake Swim with the encouragement of her teammates from Royal Masters. Masters swimming also gave Sharon the confidence to sign up for surfing school.



Before her open water swim, Sharon prepared by completing a couple of 1500 meter races in pool meets this past season. She chose the Osoyoos swim because it was near a friend's house and the course



Sharon and Chubbie at the finish of the Osoyoos ATLS

was buoy to buoy, so she thought of the swim as just three 500 metre chunks.

At first it seemed a bit tougher than she imagined, but once she slowed her pace down, focussed on her breathing and found her rhythm, she began to relax and could focus on sighting and staying on course.

"The hardest part was getting the wetsuit on. I tried two days before the race, and it took an hour and three tries. When you get hot and sweaty, it is very difficult. On the day of the race, I put it on inside the air conditioned house! It turned out that the swim was a truly enjoyable experience. Seeing other swimmers that I have become friends with at the swim meets, and watching other swimmers challenge themselves with longer swims all contributed to a great day!"

Sharon was happy to see familiar MSABC faces and appreciated the ATLS crew volunteers who supported swimmers throughout the race.



MSABC 1ST MEET OF THE SEASON

OCTOBER 17, 2026

HOLLYBURN COUNTRY CLUB POOL

1 PM - APPROX. 7 PM

the meet package will be available on msabc.ca and nsm.swimtopia.com



THREE GENERATIONS ACROSS THE LAKE

NATALIE & EVAN BAYLEY WHITE ROCK WAVE

This summer, we took part in the Across the Lake Swim Osoyoos on July 5—and it became a very special family experience.

My dad, Joe, and my stepmom, Debbie, live in Los Angeles and haven't competed in many events in Canada since moving to the United States nearly 30 years ago. To celebrate my dad's 75th birthday, we thought the Okanagan would be the perfect place to meet. What better way to celebrate than by swimming Across the Lake together?

My son Evan, who is 19, decided to join us. Evan and I both swim regularly with the White Rock Wave in Surrey. He has competed in a few sprint triathlons but had never taken part in an open-water swimming event. I hadn't raced in open water since my early 20s, although I regularly swim at Sasamat Lake in Port Moody with some of my lanemates.

Evan, Dad, and I entered the 1.5-kilometre swim, while Debbie took on the 3-kilometre distance.



The start was briefly delayed when one of the buoy markers came loose. The water was quite choppy—especially in the middle of the lake. I was excited, but I also found myself worrying about Dad and Debbie out there.

In the end, we all had great swims and completed our events, despite swallowing more than our share of Osoyoos Lake water!

It was an incredible feeling to see three generations of swimmers take part in the same event. Evan and I each placed first in our age categories, while Dad placed second in his.

It was the perfect way to celebrate his 75th birthday, and a day our family will remember for a very long time. I hope we get the chance to do it all again one day!



Debbie and Joe Harrison, Evan and Natalie Bayley

EAT ICE CREAM AND SWIM

MELANIE BUGGEY NANAIMO EBBTIDES

There are many ways to spend a beautiful summer day on Vancouver Island. You could go sailing. You could go kayaking. You could sit on a beach with a book. I chose to swim across the Strait of Georgia for eight hours and forty-two minutes, which suggests that somewhere along the way I stopped making good decisions.



The swim was from Reception Point in Sechelt to Schooner Cove in Nanoose Bay: a theoretical 29 kilometres if you swim in a perfectly straight line. Unfortunately, I have apparently never been introduced to the concept of a straight line, as my poor lane mates can attest to.

Why did you do this swim? People keep asking me. The truth is, I don't really know. I've looked across at the mainland my whole life and, every now and then, had the thought: I wonder if I could swim that. It was never some grand

ambition or a carefully calculated athletic goal. It was more of a "why the heck not?" kind of thing.

In the back of my mind, I suppose I also thought of it as a potential English Channel audition. If I liked swimming across a really big body of water, maybe I'd give the Channel a shot one day. So I figured I'd start by swimming to Nanoose.

Thankfully, I had Christina Pendergast as my observer. Most of you will know Christina as an utter speed queen who has a habit of humiliating anyone unfortunate enough to swim against her. She and her

husband, Sean, who piloted the boat, were kind enough to spend the day following me across the Strait and yelling at me every time I started swimming in the wrong direction . . . which, incidentally, was a lot.

Before I even got in the water, we saw an orca and a sea lion. I wasn't sure whether this was an omen or a good sign. Luckily, I'm not superstitious. Just crazy.

The pre-swim preparation was also going exceptionally well. I hadn't slept, and I'd barely been able to eat for a couple of days because of nausea. Perhaps I was nervous, although this was confusing because I normally stress eat. Apparently there is a level of nervousness at which even I lose interest in snacks.

The water also turned out to be significantly warmer than expected, meaning I had spent weeks putting on a joyous insulating layer of fat for absolutely no reason. Apparently I had bulked for a pool that did not exist—at least the ice cream was good.

Things went downhill almost immediately after I got in. I got seasick. Quickly. Sweet joy. Lots of vomiting ensued, and I mean the sort of vomiting that felt less like an athletic event and more like an exorcism. I swam through it because I sure as heck wasn't going to float around in my own puke. Ginger tea turned out to be my absolute saviour. I felt like a complete dummy for not having it earlier.

Meanwhile, Christina was dutifully feeding me gels and Gatorade every half hour. This sounds lovely in theory. In practice, it meant that every thirty minutes she would offer me food and I would shout, "NOOOOOO!" I am not proud of how much abuse she had to put up with.

Swimming on a full-ish stomach utterly sucks, and after enough hours the sweet flavour of gels and Gatorade becomes positively gag-inducing. I never thought I'd reach a point where something sugary would make me

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angry, but the Strait has a way of teaching you things about yourself that you didn't particularly want to know.

I was also on my period, so I had some mild cramping to contend with. I think it made me slightly angrier and caused me to hate the world a little more than usual, which was actually pretty useful. If you're going to spend eight hours swimming across a large body of water, embracing a little self-loathing can be surprisingly motivating.

Somewhere around the halfway point, I realized I was probably going to get the record. That was pretty cool.

I'd started the morning knowing I was going to make it across. I just had absolutely no idea how long it was going to take. Suddenly, the question became how quickly I could do it. I'd known the fastest female time

was 11 hours and 20 minutes, and I'd secretly thought it would be neat to beat that. But the fastest male time was 9 hours and 23 minutes, and it genuinely hadn't occurred to me that I might be anywhere near that.

Suddenly, I was apparently racing a man from 1967, when the Beatles were still touring and Gatorade had only just been invented. The record had stood for 59 years, which is long enough that I feel a little bad about disturbing it. On the other hand, it was just sitting there being all record-like, so really this is partly its own fault.

The final stretch, however, was not without psychological warfare. At one point, I asked how much farther I had to go and heard "2.6 kilometres."

Excellent. Two-point-six kilometres is nothing. I could do two-point-six kilometres. I had already been swimming for hours. The end was practically here.

PHOTO: Melanie en route.

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Except that I had heard incorrectly. It was 3.6 kilometres.

That extra kilometre was demoralizing in a way that is difficult to explain unless you've spent several hours swimming toward a piece of land that stubbornly refuses to get closer. So I decided to swim slowly for about half an hour and wallow in my own sadness.

I wasn't giving up. I was simply taking an emotional support swim. Eventually, I got over myself and started hustling again. And then, finally, there was land.

I finished the crossing in 8 hours and 42 minutes, breaking a record that had stood for 59 years.

The strangest part was that I felt great. In fact, I felt so good at the end that I honestly think I could have turned around and done it again. I would have been spectacularly bored, probably significantly more insane than I already am, and I'm fairly certain Christina and Sean would have abandoned me somewhere in the middle of the Strait, but knowing I had it in me was pretty cool.

I'm incredibly grateful to Christina and Sean for getting me safely across, particularly given how much time they spent yelling at me to swim in the direction of the actual destination, and to everyone who helped make the swim possible.

As for what comes next, I'm going to take a loooooong break from freestyle. So everyone will probably see me at swim meets doing copious amounts of butterfly, pretending I have it in me. I don't. But at least the walls are only 25 metres away. *(Open Water stories continue on p. 10)*

BURSARY SWIMMERS

MSABC offers a bursary program to support the extra expenses of traveling to a National or International event. You can read more about our financial support programs at msabc.ca/support. This year, we were pleased to support Justin and Christopher at Canadian Nationals in Windsor.

JUSTIN KING CHILLIWACK MASTERS

After joining Chilliwack Masters in April 2025, Justin King had become very interested in competition, swimming in virtually every sanctioned meet he could within British Columbia. He is hard-working, enthusiastic, and has an infectious love of swimming. As soon as a swim meet is posted, he is always one of the first to register (within 15 minutes of registration opening!). Justin has also competed in several Special Olympics meets.

Thanks to the generous assistance of MSABC, Justin was able to swim at the Swimming Canada Masters Championships held in Windsor, Ontario from May 22 – 24, 2026. Justin had a wonderful time in Windsor with his three teammates, competing in seven individual events, and one relay. Justin applied maximum effort in each event, beating many of his stated goals. He competed in the 25 to 29 year age group placing 17th in the 50m free and the 100m free. He placed 11th in the 50m breaststroke and obtained four top-ten finishes, placing 8th in the 400m free, and 5th in the 200m free, the 100m breaststroke, and the 200m breaststroke.

Justin found this national event so rewarding that he is saving his hard-earned money to compete in the Swimming Canada Masters Championships in May 2027.

The Chilliwack Masters Swim Club thanks MSABC for their generous support, allowing Justin to realize his dream of swimming in the Swimming Canada Masters Championships. *Continued on page 9*

Chilliwack swimmers Mark Langer, Justin King, Neil Reeder, and Taghi Hamed-Shamaei



Bursary Swimmers Continued from page 8

CHRISTOPHER FINN CANADENSIS VICTORIA MASTERS

The Masters Championships in Windsor was exceptionally well organized, with all events happening on schedule and without issue. With the events occurring in rapid succession, in two pools simultaneously, ever-changing heat and lane assignments, and staying on top of my resting heart rate, I admit it was a challenging three days of competition!

The first event for me was the 1500M freestyle in which I placed 6th in my age group and was within thirty seconds of my seed time. On the final day, I placed 5th



in the 800m freestyle and achieved a personal best. In between, I did a number of sprints, including a 50M backstroke and 100M IM, neither of which I had ever competed in before. There were many other athletes faster than me in these events but the chance to be amongst them was priceless.

I discovered, embarrassingly, that seed times need to be precise in these meets—as I was placed in a heat for the 800 that was likely three races faster than my time. When the bells started ringing I swam faster than ever to not be ten laps behind the second to last swimmer—hence my PB!

The meet itself was attended by swimmers truly from across Canada—Victoria to Newfoundland and Labrador. Some of the clubs were really well-represented and created a sporting atmosphere for everyone. Those of us who were solo from our clubs seemed to find each other and rally some cheering when not racing.

Windsor's facilities were terrific—located right downtown and on the shoreline park of the Detroit River. The international flavour of the city was reflected



Victoria Masters swimmer Christopher Finn Canadensis in the pool's meters and yards lane-markings—which admittedly, messed-up a few of my first laps in the 1500!

Overall, a memorable meet full of fast racing, new experiences, and great camaraderie. My appreciation to MSABC for supporting my participation!

MSABC COMMITTEES

MSABC has three committees committed to bringing all masters swimmers across the province the best possible swimming experience. We encourage MSABC members to join our committees. Send an email expressing your interest as indicated below.

Open Water Committee

- Dale Robinson,
vicepresident@msabc.ca

Awards & Incentives Committee

- Linda Stanley Wilson,
communications@msabc.ca

Policies Committee

- John Holmwood,
president@msabc.ca



MSABC SWIMMERS CONQUER ENGLISH CHANNEL

KYLIE TUCKER AND ROBYNNE OUCHI VERNON MASTERS

Two Vernon Masters became the 39th and 40th Canadians to complete solo English Channel swims. On July 8, 2026, Robynne Ouchi successfully swam from England to France. How did Kylie find out



Kylie and Robynne

Robynne had finished her swimming? "My phone started making this weird sound and then I realized it was our pilot, Stuart calling me from the boat at 5:49 p.m. He told me to be at the dock at 2:30 a.m. and be ready to swim. I asked him if he had a successful Channel

swimmer on board and he replied, "Of course!" I hung up and realized I had 8 hours to eat, sleep and get to Dover!"

What was Kylie's pre-race meal? Fish and chips at the local pub, The Rising Sun.

At 3:39 a.m. on Thursday, July 9, 2026, Kylie entered the water from Samphire Beach and began her crossing. She recalls the start of the swim was remarkably peaceful. The water was calm and warm, about 18 C, reminding Tucker of swimming in Kalamalka Lake at night – familiar, except for the salt.

The early hours were easy but fatigue soon set in. After just 2.5 hours, Kylie was feeling tired. She told herself that this was just the beginning and it was time to perk up. Thankfully, her crew, Caroline Swims, adjusted her feed, adding maltodextrin to her pureed peaches (photo at right), which quickly restored her energy. Six

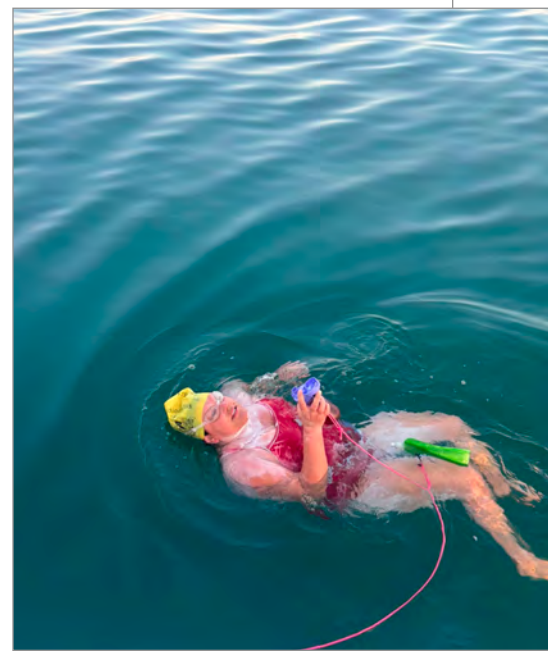
hours into the swim, Tucker had covered about 16 kilometers which was on par for her training pace. Things were going well. Then came the the Separation Zone.

Robynne had warned Kylie that she would know when she reached the Separation Zone because the water would be still . . . and there would be jellyfish. Robynne was right! Kylie did one powerful pull relishing the tranquil water. With her second stroke her hand brushed a jellyfish. Zap! Kylie tried to use mind over matter thanking the jellyfish for transferring its energy to her. Before she completed her gratitude she was stung by a second jellyfish. Kylie lost count how many times she was stung, 40, 50 who knows—there was a lot of energy being transferred! She appreciated the beautiful colours of the jellyfish but called unnecessary roughness on the jellyfish to her face.

The biggest challenge came later in the afternoon when powerful waves made maintaining a rhythm almost impossible. "It was funny to breath to the side and be looking down into the hull of the boat one stroke, then be under the boat next stroke." The Captain told Kylie that she needed to swim close to the boat, preferably within the width of a pool lane. Kylie tried to stay close and during the recovery phase of her stroke, her left hand made contact with the side of the boat so many times that the top of her hand was bruised and purple.

Yet the current would push her significantly off course. One moment she would breathe and see the boat beside her. The next, she would find herself over 10 meters

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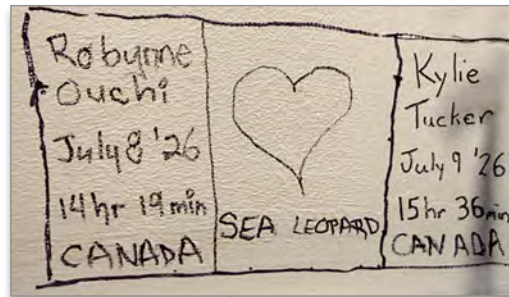


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away from the boat having to race back along side. Tucker described the experience as swimming through a "washing machine," with a spin cycle lasting 7 hours.

As France appeared closer and then farther away, Tucker increased her kick and relied on a personal mantra: "I am strong. I am fierce. I am determined. I am fun. I am f~@king awesome. I am full of gratitude." After a few hours of this near and far game, around 6:30 p.m., her crew told her she had broken through the worst of the currents. Kylie remembers thinking, "Yes, France is allowing visitors today!" About 45 minutes later, Tucker reached the shore. Her landing was less than graceful. She fell three times while trying to get out of the water, injuring her toe and wrist, but the falls could not diminish the achievement.

Kylie Tucker completed a solo English Channel crossing in 15 hours and 36 minutes, covering 53.4 kilometres—significantly farther than the 34.9-kilometre straight-line distance. She is now the 40th Canadian to successfully



complete a solo English Channel swim, while her fellow Vernon Masters teammate Robynne became the 39th Canadian.

Despite sore muscles, a swollen wrist, a damaged

toenail and a saltwater-ravaged tongue, Tucker said the experience was overwhelmingly positive. "I loved the majority of my swim," she said, estimating that about 90 per cent of the experience was enjoyable but definitely harder than she anticipated. She is also extremely grateful to everyone who helped her raise over \$10,000 for the Canadian Cancer Society: fundraisemyway.cancer.ca/campaigns/Kylie-s-Swim-For-The-Cure

After more than three years of waiting, training, and preparation, Kylie can now add a new title to her name: English Channel Swimmer.

NOTE: Robynne (pictured below) is preparing an article about the mental preparation aspect of the channel. Look for that toward the end of the year.



SUNSHINE COAST ADVENTURE: 4 DAYS IN OPEN WATER

STEWART SCOTT COAST SWIM TEAM

A swim holiday should change the view every day. Over four days, our crew moved from the bright saltwater of Howe Sound to an emerald forest lake, a secret coastal channel and a mountain-framed misty inlet on British Columbia's Sunshine Coast.

There is a particular rhythm to a multi-day swim camp. Wake early. Check the water. Pack fuel. Zip into a still-damp wetsuit. Swim somewhere you have never seen from shore. Find warm food. Trade stories. Sleep. Then wake up and do it again in a completely different landscape.

For four days in July 2026, that rhythm carried our Sunshine Coast Adventure crew through four distinct waterscapes in coastal British Columbia. The route began at Whytecliff Park before crossing by ferry to the Sunshine Coast, then continued through the clear green water of Ruby Lake, the mountain mist of Lamb Bay and a quiet final morning at Willow Point Beach.

This was not a race with a fixed course and a clock at the finish. It was a supported journey shaped by weather, wind, tides, the group and the coast itself. That flexibility did not make the adventure smaller. It made every day its own story.

DAY 1: WHYTECLIFF PARK

The camp began before most of Vancouver had finished its first coffee. At Whytecliff Park, the sky was blue, the water was bright and the rocky island offshore gave everyone an immediate point on the horizon. Gear was sorted, bottles were labelled and the safety briefing brought the group into focus. Wetsuits, bright caps and high-visibility tow floats transformed individual swimmers into one unmistakable line on the water.

The first swim of a four-day camp is about more than distance. It is where people learn one another's pace, where feeding stops find their rhythm and where a collection of swimmers begins to move like a crew. The

guides stayed close, the group regrouped regularly and that first-day mixture of anticipation and nerves gradually settled into steady strokes.

Back on land, there was little time to linger. Wet gear and luggage went back into the cars and everyone headed for the ferry. Even the terminal became part of the fun: swimmers compared check-in lanes, joked about racing one another to the gate and tried to work out who had made the earlier sailing.

By afternoon, the group had crossed Howe Sound and started settling into Gibsons. Some went directly in search of lunch. Others checked into the hotel. Soon there were plans for poolside food and the kind of relaxed conversation that only comes after the first big swim is safely behind you. Day one had done its job. The camp was no longer an itinerary. It had begun.

DAY 2: RUBY LAKE—WHEN THE COAST TURNED EMERALD

The original plan for Saturday was an early ocean swim around the Trail Islands. Everyone prepared for the camp's longest day, carrying enough hydration and fuel for hours in the water. But the wind forecast was the deciding factor, and the route shifted inland to Ruby Lake.

That is part of real adventure swimming. A route is never more important than a good decision. Ruby Lake was not a consolation prize. It was a complete change of world. The ocean's broad blue horizon gave way to green water, narrow passages and forest leaning down to the shoreline. From the surface, the route seemed to unfold one corner at a time. Underwater, the lake glowed in shades of emerald as bubbles and sunbeams moved through the clear water.

Long swims reward the rhythm a swimmer can return to: relaxed recovery, calm breathing, a clean sighting line and a feed before the body begins asking for one. Support paddlers carried nutrition, watched the group

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and gave everyone a reliable place to gather. The route could feel ambitious without ever feeling solitary.

When the swim ended, the recovery plan became wonderfully informal. There was post-swim food, a traffic jam on the way into Sechelt, a scramble to assemble enough seats at lunch and, later, tea and cookies in bed for at least one thoroughly tired swimmer. By evening, some of the crew walked out for dinner while others gathered for refreshments by the hotel pool.

It was the kind of day that explains why a swim camp is more than several long swims placed beside one another. The effort continues from one morning to the next, but so do the jokes, the meals and the small acts of looking after each other.

DAY 3: LAMB BAY –THE CALM & WILD COAST

Sunday began slowly by design. After two substantial swim days, the crew had time for coffee, brunch and a little more recovery

before the afternoon start. The plan was a

five-kilometre “secret channel” swim at Lamb Bay, timed to find the best available window between heavier rain and wind.

On the drive north, the coast offered a surprise. A whale surfaced close to shore near Davis Bay, prompting an urgent message to the group and an immediate request from those farther ahead: could someone please tell it to meet everyone at Lamb Bay?

The whale declined to confirm the appointment. Lamb Bay supplied plenty of drama on its own. Mountain slopes rose straight from the water, their upper reaches disappearing into low cloud. The surface

shifted between silver and deep green. Bright caps and tow floats formed a thin, colourful line beneath the mist, making the swimmers look very small against the scale of the coast.

This was the expedition chapter of the camp. Paddleboards carried supplies and helped the guides manage navigation, regrouping and changing conditions. The route was broken into manageable sections: swim, sight, feed, check in, then continue. There was no need to “conquer” the landscape. The pleasure came from moving through it carefully and under your own power.

The day ended in warm clothes and a shared dinner in Lower Gibsons. There was also an early birthday celebration—proof that on a swim camp, even the milestones on land become part of the adventure.

DAY 4: WILLOW POINT BEACH



Above the surface, cedar and cloud. Below it, green light and a moment of silence before and the next stroke.

The final morning always feels different.

The routine is familiar now, but shoulders are tired. Swimmers know where their goggles are, how much fuel they need and who is likely to have the missing piece of kit.

Confidence has grown at the same time as fatigue.

At Willow Point Beach, the group set out along the shoreline toward Porpoise Bay on a new out-and-back route, with a shorter option available for anyone who needed it. Mist softened the far shore. The cold was sharper than anyone would have chosen, and the weather again demanded good decisions from the guides.

There were small signs of life in the water—jellyfish below the surface, birds along the shoreline—and a final sequence of feeds, regroupings and steady

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strokes. No one needed a dramatic finish line. Returning to the beach together after four consecutive days said enough. The hot springs did not materialize. Breakfast, hot drinks, showers and dry clothes had to do.

As cars split for breakfast and different ferries home, the messages in the group chat became a chorus of thanks –to fellow swimmers, organizers, carpools, roommates, paddlers and kayakers, and even the marine life that had shared the route.

The shortest review was also one of the best:

“It. Was. A. Blast!!” – Francesca

WHAT FOUR DAYS CAN BECOME

The Sunshine Coast camp showed what happens when a swim trip is allowed to unfold as a journey rather than a single event.

Every day offered a new visual language: bright ocean, emerald lake, mountain-framed bay and misty inlet. Thoughtful support made the distances achievable. Flexible route choices made the experience safer and more honest. Shared meals and recovery time turned people who arrived with different paces and goals into a crew. It also offered a glimpse of what could come next.

We want to welcome swimmers from across Canada and around the world to experience British Columbia this way. The long-term vision is a full week-long swim vacation on the Sunshine Coast: more time to explore its ocean coves, forest lakes and quiet inlets; more room for recovery, local food and coastal experiences; and a complete package that makes arriving from farther away feel simple.

The swimming will remain at the centre, but the holiday will be bigger than the kilometres. It will be a week of waking up somewhere beautiful, swimming a route chosen for that day's conditions, sharing the experience with a small group and discovering the coast one stroke at a time.

Four days gave us four waterscapes and one unforgettable crew. Imagine what we could do with seven.

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PHOTO BELOW: Stopping to observe a family of seals relaxing on the rocks while we swim through Lamb Bay on day three of the adventure. The swimmers seem so small against the misty mountain backdrop.

