

NEM News

the New England Masters Swim Club, Inc., newsletter

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Fall Swimming Begins!

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Realizing a Dream

2008 Olympian Jarrod Shoemaker is a member of NEM and Minuteman Masters Swim Club. Jarrod has been swim training with Coach Rich Axtell for over three years. Coach Rich went to Beijing as part of Jarrod's coaching staff. The following is Coach Rich's account of the journey.

Going to the Olympics has always been a dream. Coaching an Olympian has been a professional goal. In the early years of my coaching career, I coached USA Swimming for club teams. Every day would start at the pool and end at the pool. Almost every weekend was spent at a meet with a different group on our team. I loved everything about it. Most of all, I loved being a positive influence in the lives of children and young adults.

Just over 10 years ago, I was searching for something that I could do that was different from what my peers were doing. I decided to transition from age group coaching and form a masters team—Minuteman Masters Swim Club at the Hanscom Air Force Base in Hanscom, MA. Making this transition was difficult for two reasons. First, I would miss making an impact on the lives of kids and young adults. Second, I was certain that my goal of coaching an Olympian was fading like a sunset. I would learn soon enough that coaching adults would provide one of the biggest challenges and sources of fulfillment that keeps me driving to the pool all these years later. And, I would learn about something cutting edge—triathlon.

This past summer, I realized one of my professional goals. Goals are made to be achieved and once they are, you must hit the reset button and ramp-up for the next one. My coaching goals are often realized on the most unassuming nights when no one is looking, but on this day, most everyone was. Before I turn the page, I will try my best to describe a day that I will never forget.

I want everyone to know how impressed I am with Jarrod Shoemaker for handling this past year with all of the poise of some-



The men's and women's U.S. Olympic Triathlon team at the after-party in Beijing.

one who has been there before. No one can understand what kinds of demands are placed on an Olympian. Double those demands for the underdog who shocked the nation to earn the first spot on the 2008 U.S. Olympic Triathlon team.

Getting to Beijing was a total team effort. Jarrod has an amazing cycling

and running coach in Tim Crowley. Tim is a consummate professional and we work very well together. Pam Minix is Jarrod's Muscle Activation specialist and helps to keep us all grounded. My coaching staff was there for me as advisors when I thought for sure I was losing my mind, and they were there to administer the plan while I spent time in the hospital with my daughter.



Tim Crowley, Jarrod Shoemaker, Pam Minix, and Rich Axtell pose in front of their hotel after Shoemaker's Olympic race.

Photos courtesy of Rich Axtell

In addition to coaches, all of the swimmers in the pool at each workout created an amazing energy that helped push us over the hump. Ethan Brown (Jarrod's training partner) forged ahead and gave it all to help Jarrod. Jarrod's wife never needs to go to the Olympics because she earned the gold all year long. Finally, our team was glued together with the support of our families and loved ones. None of the coaches would be able to do what we do without that support. We all became one, and this one was for all of us.

August 19th, 2008 Beijing, China

As soon as we stepped foot on the street, I could feel my heart pounding in my chest. It was a gorgeous August morning. The sun was shining brightly in a deep blue sky. The city street was a bustling fury of people going everywhere. The noises, the sights, the people, the cars, everything was so different. People were talking to me, but all I could hear was my own breathing.

Our steps were light, and we walked with a bounce. We walked side-by-side as if we'd just landed on the moon. We were walking to get on a special bus to bring us to *the Olympics*. As we approached our bus, there were scores of volunteers and officials in uniform greeting us with cautious smiles and directing us with hurried motions. Onlookers snapped photos of us, not because we were famous, but because we were Westerners. The bus whisked us off to the triathlon venue about 10 minutes away.

When we got off the bus, I did everything I could to slow things down. This was it, and it was all happening so fast. We had to walk up a hill to get to the venue, and this was appropriate. It had been an uphill climb for three years. We worked together one-on-one and as part of a team. As individuals, we had all gone through so much.

We learned about each other, about ourselves, and what it takes to train like a champion. We learned how to let go, and we learned to never quit. We laughed, we cried, we did more when everyone expected less. We had times that will forever remain between us and never be let out of the vault. We circled one date on the calendar to have the best day of all. We chose our path and never wavered from that path.

So there we were, climbing one last hill. At the top of the hill was security. We might as well have been trying to get into the White House for lunch with the President, security was that tight. Once we made it through, it all opened up into a *Hoosters* moment.

The venue was majestic. The stadium was nestled against a reservoir and draped with mountains. The venue stadium was immaculate, the music pumped in made it feel like Disney World, and five military helicopters flying at different altitudes promised to keep my heart pumping. We wanted everything all at once. We wanted to be coaches, we wanted to be tourists, we wanted to shop for relatives and friends back home, and we wanted to eat Olympic ice cream.

It became increasingly difficult to put the moment in perspective. As we took our seats in the stadium, I was thankful I had said my good-lucks to Jarrod back at the hotel. I would never want him to see me like this. I have always prided myself on being a rock for the athlete, but this was the *realization of a dream*. The dream of helping someone else achieve *their* dream was sending chills through my body. Jarrod's entourage all sat together: coaches, family, and friends.

Before we knew what had happened someone screamed, "there he is!" The race was still 40 minutes away but the athletes had emerged into the stadium, running back and forth as part of their warm-up routines. Jarrod looked right up at us, flashing a Wheaties Box smile, and waved like he'd just been elected mayor. It was awesome to see him smiling and taking in a moment that could easily pass one by. The smiles gave the coaches a pretty big sigh of relief as well.

Next thing I knew, someone said, "there he is again!" Jarrod was getting ready to take a warm up swim right in front of the grand stand. He looked great. His stroke was long, and I was relieved to see this after not seeing him swim for two weeks. (Jarrod was at a training camp in Korea with the other Olympians— yes, he did our workouts). Nearly as soon as the swim warm up started, it was over, and the athletes reported to the tent to get ready to be introduced.

There were 54 athletes that toed-up on the starting line. Jarrod had never placed higher than 23rd at World Championships. This day was World Championships on steroids. Jarrod came out of the tent, waved and smiled at us again, and trotted off to the pontoon.

The start was probably the most dramatic thing I've endured. Over the speaker system they counted down the final seconds to the race start with giant gong sounds. Finally, the gun went off. I was numb. At times like this I always wish I was Tim Crowley; if something went wrong on the bike I could always say, "there's always the run."

I couldn't find Jarrod on the swim for the first several hundred meters. I lost him just seconds after the start. This was probably due to the fact that I was having trouble holding my binoculars

steady. About half way through the swim, I remember Alicia Kaye (Jarrod's wife) yell over, "Rich, he looks amazing." That he did.

Jarrod got out of the water with a large pack that was all grouped together, which put him in position to be competitive. He was right where he needed to be. Tim leaned over, patted me on the back and dropped a vintage one-liner: "Good work, I'll take it from here."

The bike was interesting. There was a break-away and then one enormous pack. The enormous pack stayed together, albeit strung out over the last two laps. Jarrod played it safe on the bike, knowing he could hammer the run with the best in the world.

There are so many things that can happen in triathlon. It should be pointed out that Jarrod got hosed in transitions one and two. In T1, there was a guy running for Jarrod's bike thinking it was his and other mishaps that caused a bottleneck. Then there was the guy who didn't hang his bike up properly, causing a bottleneck on T2. A few extra seconds in transition can translate to minutes on the course.

We had really hoped for two packs on the bike, with Jarrod being at the front of the chase pack or sitting comfy at the back of the lead pack, but as fate would have it, we played with the cards that were dealt.

Jarrod came off the bike in what seemed like 100th place after playing it safe, per the plan. He laced up and mounted his attack. Jarrod found his rhythm and just started picking off athletes from every continent. It was like he was globe-trotting, conquering one country at a time. When he approached the stadium for the final time, he stepped on the gas and cruised into position to finish in the top 20 at the Olympic Games.

Jarrod crossed the line in 18th place, five spots higher than he ever has on such a big stage. Eighteenth place on a day that he had circled on his calendar almost a year ago. Eighteenth place in a year that he had set his sights on three years ago.

It was hard not to sprint out and tackle Jarrod after his race. We were all so happy for him. After watching him mingle with his teammates and peers from other countries, and answering every question from the press, we walked down the hill to the bus.

Two things of note happened on the way back to the hotel. While on the bus, we passed Jarrod's mom who was jogging back to the hotel with one of Jarrod's friends in tow. In case anyone is wondering what to do after your kid races in the Olympics, there you go.



Tim Crowley and Rich Axtell await the start of the men's triathlon at the Ming Tomb Reservoir in northern Beijing.

Second, when we walked back down the street to the hotel from the bus, I heard something other than my heart pounding and myself breathing for the first time. I heard someone say, “beep, beep!” It was Jarrod riding his bike back to the hotel after racing in the Olympics. He could’ve taken the athlete shuttle, but he didn’t.

We all gathered in front of the hotel and were welcomed by a throng of well-wishers. When we left that morning, we were all doing something for the first time. When we returned, we had either raced in the Olympics or coached someone at the Olympics. We will have that forever. We are alumni, class of 2008.

August 19th, 2008 is a day I will never forget. It was the end of an amazing journey and the start of something special— a journey that brought us to the deepest parts of desire and to the far side of the world. We have started something special as we’ve already hit reset on our goals. See you in 2012.

I challenge all who have read this to set a goal and go after it. Your Olympic goal may be doing a flip-turn for the first time at a mini meet or swimming the hour swim. Believe in yourself and never take your eye off the prize. Have passion and learn to channel emotion.—
Rich Axtell, Head Coach, Minuteman Masters Swim Club

Call Me a Traditionalist

By the time most of you read this column, New England will have experienced a “hard” frost (in fact it was 29 degrees outside my house this morning), there is a good chance we have seen a hint of snow flurries, and the thoughts of this past summer’s open water swims will be fast receding in our memories. My last open water swim of the season was a training swim on October 3rd, and despite the waters being warm enough to continue for another week or so beyond that, even I have essentially hung up my wetsuits for the season.

There is an odd relationship swimmers have with open water. Most “traditional” swimmers seem to prefer to swim in pools with anti-septic, a well-defined lane, and a clear line to keep them on the straight and narrow. Often, my fellow Masters swimmers express trepidation when discussing open water. Sometimes it’s the lack of a line telling you which way to go, running into some seaweed, or the possibility of seeing an aquatic inhabitant, which according to many of the swimmers I hang out with, are rather fierce creatures just waiting to make an “inverse sushi” out of us.

Ironically though, the first Olympic swimming champion, Alfred Hajos of Hungary, won both the 100M and 1,200M, (yes, 1,200) each of which was an open water ocean swim. In fact, Olympic swims for the first four Olympiads were in either oceans or rivers. Most amusingly, the 1900 Paris Olympic swim events included “a 200M obstacle swim and underwater swimming. For the obstacle swim, the swimmers had to climb over or under poles and boats. The underwater swim gave one point for each second underwater and two points for each meter swum while underwater.”¹ Perhaps open water swimming is more “traditional” than we realize.

Regardless of the amusing relationship between pool swimmers and open water swimmers, I will not debate the fact that they are two different animals. In most pool swims, I tend to be a middle-of-the-pack kind of person. In most open water swims it varies from the middle of the pack to the top 10%. Weird, eh?

I believe there are three reasons for this. First, if you are going to race in open water, a certain lack of fear is required. I’m not suggesting being stupid and taking unnecessary risks, but you do have to understand that once you take the appropriate precautions, you should not worry about the other things. As examples, I have raced in 58 degree water across the Chesapeake Bay; blasted through a few unexpected kelp beds in Gloucester; endured a rain storm where two inches of water fell during a swim; and watched as 20 people dropped out of a race with eight-foot breakers due to an off-shore hurricane.

The second, and I suspect most important issue, is your pre-race preparation and warm-up. I don’t mean this from a stand point of actually warming up your muscles, though clearly this is important. The real issue is that race courses look very different from the water than they do from the shore. To illustrate, I’ll share with you the open water leg of a recent triathlon I did in Narragansett, Rhode Island.

The day dawned clear and cool with the air temperature about 48 F and water temperature a pleasant 65 F or so. The swim part of the race is 1.2 miles, and you have to walk about that distance down the beach to get to the start. I watched the water as I walked. There was no fog, but there were five-foot breakers. When I got to the start, I put on my wetsuit and ventured into the water.

As I walked into the water, it slowly rose to my waist, then suddenly, I tripped on a sandbar that had not been there on previous swims. I stepped up with the water now down to my shins. “Hmmm, that’s good to know,” I thought. Next, the breakers. The first one knocked me back two feet. The second knocked my goggles off. Once I got through them, I swam out to the first buoy. It took less than 30 seconds. Then I relaxed, watched the shore, and felt the current. In 10 seconds, I had floated about 10 yards past the buoy. This meant that if it really took me 30 seconds to swim to the buoy, I would be off by 30 yards when I got there, so I knew to adjust my start point on shore.

Lastly, I floated and watched for the other marker over a mile away. Despite being 60 inches tall, it was completely invisible due to the five-foot (i.e., 60”) waves. But every once in a while, I could see it. So, I marked it against the shore. It lined up perfectly with the corner of a condo building which was easily identified by its chimney.

Of the 300 people on shore that day, less than 50 had gotten into the water to warm-up. Only 10 went all the way to the first marker, and only one other person that I saw scanned the shore like I did.

Back on shore, I wrestled with the last major issue. How to deal with the breakers? I was in the second wave of swimmers. As I watched the first wave get knocked around, I settled on my strategy.

I paced 30 yards to my left to adjust for the current (much farther than other swimmers did). When my wave started, I jogged in up to my waist, stepped up onto the new sandbar, ran to the end of it, and as the first major wave approached, I dove straight into the base of it and under it. I then did this “dolphin” move again and again. The third time the wave hit me VERY hard and for a moment, I thought I would lose my goggles, but luckily they stayed. After the fourth dive, I was past the breakers and swimming in a direction that looked like it would take me to Portugal. It didn't. The current did exactly what I thought it would do, and in no time, I was turning around the first marker having never had to correct my course. As I rounded it, I was able to count four other yellow caps from my wave, and a brief glimpse back toward shore revealed most of the yellow caps standing up in the breakers, being constantly knocked backwards.

Now I was swimming and completely unable to see the next buoy. But I could see the building and I swam towards that. After a while I had a feeling of dread. There was NO ONE near me. This was either very good or very bad. I was either way off course, or everyone else was. I quick sight showed I was dead on for the building. Sometimes you just have to have a little self-confidence. So I swam like this for 20 minutes, just heading toward a building on shore—alone. And then, the buoy was there, right in front of me. Then I was body surfing the breakers, and I was done. Just like that.

There were several colleagues of mine in that race who train in open water with me. On our training swims, we are usually within half a minute to a minute of each other. That day I swam 1.2 miles in 25:37. My training partners ranged from a time of 28:12 to 29:24 (though I will concede they were doing the entire triathlon and I only swam). But I also cannot help but think back on races like this one and smile because a well-executed open water race is hard to come by.

I guess given the history of swimming, you can just call me a traditionalist.— **Al Prescott, Minuteman Masters**

¹ *Illustrated History of Olympic Swimming, 1896-1908, www.swimming.about.com*

PenBay Swim Clinic with Karlyn Pipes-Neilsen

PenBay Masters (Rockport, Maine) will be hosting a freestyle clinic featuring Karlyn Pipes-Neilsen on December 6 & 7, 2008, at the PenBay YMCA. Karlyn was named the Masters Swimmer of the Year by *Swimming World Magazine* in 2004 and 2007 and she was a 2007 inductee into the International Swimming Hall of Fame. She has set over 200 Masters World records since 1993 and teaches clinics all around the world. This clinic will benefit any level Masters swimmer as well as triathletes. There are two sessions to choose from, one per day, with a maximum of 12 swimmers per session. Karlyn will film and analyze each swimmer, with two hours of pool time and two hours of instruction, discussion, and DVD review. For information and sign-up, please e-mail Fritz Homans at: FHomans@aol.com.

Two New Workout Groups in Metro West

For swimmers in the Metro West Boston area, your options for swimming with a Masters workout group just increased by two.

Wellesley College on route 135 in Wellesley, MA recently began a Masters program. Coached by the college team's assistant coach, Christopher Card, this new team meets five times per week. Sessions run Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 6 to 7:30 am and Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 6:30 to 8 pm. For more information, please contact Christopher Card at: ccard@wellesley.edu.

Minuteman Masters has also expanded its program. Minuteman has partnered with the Bosse Sports Club on route 20 in Sudbury, MA. The new squad, coached by long-time Natick High School swim team and former Natick Longfellow Masters head coach, Jennifer Dutton, will meet Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 5:45 to 7 am, Tuesday and Thursday evenings from 7 to 8:15 pm, and Sundays from 5 to 6:15 pm beginning November 1st with a special half session running through December 31st. Space is limited. For more information, please visit the Minuteman Masters web site at: www.minutemanmasters.com, call (978) 443-4613, or e-mail Head Coach Rich Axtell at rich@minutemanmasters.com.

Mini Meet Locations Wanted

New England Masters Swimmers: we continue to need your help in finding pools in your area— within 25 miles of where you live— that would host a Masters mini meet. This type of meet usually attracts between 30 and 60 swimmers and runs under four hours. It's a good fundraiser for your organization.

As I write this, we just finished a mini meet at Simmons College in Boston. My wife Cathy and I got up at 5am, we enjoyed our coffee. Then were out of the house by 5:05. We made a stop for newspapers and arrived at Simmons College at 321 Brookline Street in Boston by 7 am. We were lucky to not have encountered much traffic. Mindy Williams, the meet director, was at the door welcoming everyone in. Only 10 swimmers had signed up ahead of time, but by 8 am when the meet started, an additional 20 or more swimmers had shown up. The Simmons College team— a great bunch of young women— helped Mindy run the meet and the strong turnout meant that the team made a little money. The meet was quick. I swam five events, which meant I got in a great workout. With a few more of these, I should be ready for the BU meet! We got home by 11:30 am, in time for Cathy to go to her workout.

The previous week, we also had a wonderful meet at Providence College, which was directed by John O'Neill. We had to get back to Salem, Massachusetts so I only had time for three events in a row. Like the meet at Simmons, the Providence College meet was very well run. There were about 60 swimmers in total, which made some cash for the swimming program at Providence College.

If you want a good workout, give these mini meets a try. Again... help us help you with your swimming. Contact me at: lincolnwjd@yahoo.com. Thanks!— **Walter Lincoln, NEM Meet Coordinator**

NEM Video Clinic Team's Latest Excellent Adventure

What could be a better ending to our summer activities than a boat trip? We spent the weekend of October 4th and 5th on Martha's Vineyard teaching a great group of swimmers. With Les Cutler and his wife as hosts, Bill Ewan and his wife, and I and my son Rob, we enjoyed an overnight at Les' house and a pre-clinic party with the clinic swimmers. I hope any future Video Clinic wannabe coaches are reading this and saying, "That could be me!" This is another example of the benefits of joining our merry band.

We could use the help. As Bill and I age up, it is time to train others in the video techniques and clinic management that we have learned over our two years of running this program. We are losing my son's services to college. He has been our backup when Mike Ross is busy or we needed an extra body. Mike's technical demonstrations have added an additional dimension to our clinics and we need other swimmers capable of providing that support. It is a great way to improve your coaching skills and meet more of the very talented and interesting members of NEM. We need members with either camera or swimming expertise and a desire to practice those skills.



Scenic shots on Martha's vineyard, a swim clinic site in 2008.

Photos courtesy of Bob Boder

If you are not using video analysis in your current program, this is a way to gain that expertise. If you use the traditional video tape and TVIO replay, this is the opportunity to learn the advantages to using DVD and digital camera media. So, while you are enjoying our views of the island, think about joining us. Contact Bob Boder (rboder@comcast.net) or Bill Ewan (W1VH@cox.net) for additional information. We have helped many swimmers improve and want to pass on our knowledge, methods, and documentation to keep the program alive.— **Bob Boder, NEM Video Clinics**



Please visit: www.swimnews.ch for links to additional articles about the video clinics and other materials authored by Robert Boder.

Records Fall at Simmons Mini Meet

On Saturday, October 18th, the Simmons College Swimming and Diving Team hosted the inaugural October Swim Fest Masters mini meet. At the conclusion of the meet, on the way out the door, the common question was "will you guys have this meet again next year?" Absolutely!

Masters swimmers representing close to a dozen teams in eastern Massachusetts turned out for the meet, including Jumbo Aquatics, BC, Wellesley, Cambridge, ABC Sharks, and of course, Simmons Masters. There were even a few representatives from Maine and New Hampshire.



The Simmons College and Masters teams hosted a fast and successful mini meet on October 18th.

Photo courtesy of Al Prescott

Highlights from the meet included four

swims that were under USMS record times, and two world records. Michael Ross of Maine Masters beat the world record in the 100M freestyle and the 100M IM for the 40-44 age group. Ross also posted a time in the 50M butterfly that was faster than the USMS record. Louis Kronfeld took down the USMS 50M breaststroke record for the 65-69 age group. People were definitely swimming fast!

With just under 35 swimmers, the meet moved along at a nice pace, while still leaving time to visit with other New England Masters swimmers. A great time was had by all! We look forward to hosting this SCM meet again next year.— **Mindy Williams, Head Coach, Simmons College**

For complete results, please visit the NEM web site at www.swimnem.org or download the full results in PDF format by going here: http://www.swimnem.org/results/2008/Simmons_MM.pdf



New Top Ten Times for 75+ at Beede

Concord mini meet director Chris Clark wrote to *NEM News* to tell us that the Masters meet held on October 26th, 2008 at the Beede Center in Concord to benefit the Concord Carlisle High School Swim Team was a smashing success, and that Ted Webster of Marlboro, Vermont swam two NEM Top Ten Times, in the 100 free and 200 free, in the 75-79 age bracket.

For complete results from the meet, please visit: <http://www.cchsfosd.org/>. For NEM Top Ten Times information and statistics, please visit: <http://www.egswim.com/ne/>

A Q&A with Dori Miller

On August 8, 2008, Dori Miller swam the English Channel from England to France in a time of 10 hours, 17 minutes. The Cambridge Masters Swim Club member sat down with NEM News to answer a few questions about her experience.

NEM News: *How does it feel to be able to call yourself an English Channel swimmer?*

Dori Miller: Thanks, Elaine. I have to admit that it's a great feeling. It's still a fairly exclusive club, and I am proud to be counted among its legends.

NEM: *What's your swimming background? When did you start training for this particular swim?*

DM: I swam for the University of Maryland as a breaststroker. I took 11 years off from the pool before coming back to Masters swimming five years ago. After a few open water races, I discovered that I really liked the sport. I decided I was ready to start training for the Channel after completing the 25K Swim Across the Sound in August 2006.

NEM: *How did you prepare for a swim of this magnitude?*

DM: I put myself on a two-year training plan to prepare for the Channel. The first year I worked on building a solid training base. I did double workouts two to four times a week. I also started training in cold water, swimming in the ocean through the end of October and even in January. During the year leading up to my swim, I worked on pacing with the help of former CMSC coach Scott VanKuilenberg. I learned to swim on an interval that I could maintain for hours on end. As soon as it was barely warm enough this spring, I spent as much time swimming in cold water as possible to acclimate. I also put on a few pounds for internal insulation.

NEM: *What were the biggest challenges you faced in training?*

DM: Physical exhaustion was something I dealt with all the time. I was always falling asleep at work. I learned that there were ups and downs in my training; sometimes from week-to-week, day-to-day, or even morning to evening workout. Scott would tell me to take a few days off. After a year, I learned when I needed rest.

The mental exhaustion was challenging, too. All that training can get boring and lonely. Luckily, I had great friends who liked to swim with me or tag along to the beach and keep me company.

NEM: *How does it work? Do you have a scheduled departure time? When did you start and where did you leave?*

DM: The English Channel is unique in that you don't have a set swim date or time that you know ahead of time. I booked a whole tide, August 7th through the 16th, with my pilot over a year in advance. Ultimately, the weather was the deciding factor for when I swam. I did not know the day before that I was going to swim the next afternoon, as the weather was predicted to be unswimmable. Chris, my pilot, called at 9 am to tell me that a small 10-hour window of good weather had opened, and I was going to swim that afternoon. I left from Shakespeare Beach, just outside of Dover Harbor at 3:30 pm that same day, August 8th, 2008.

NEM: *Were you nervous before the start?*

DM: There wasn't time to be nervous. My crew and I only had a few hours to get ready to go. Not knowing worked out well, because I slept really well the night before.



Heather Nicholson, Dori Miller, and Dave Mak onboard the Seafarer II, her guide boat, prior to the start of the crossing.

NEM: *What was the weather like?*

DM: It was pouring when we arrived at the marina. It had stopped raining when I started, but there were very dark ominous clouds towards France. I had a tail wind to push me along. The pilot anticipated rough water, but it didn't calm down as quickly as he thought it would.

NEM: *Were there any other swimmers out that day?*

DM: Two other British men started that day, but neither finished. One pulled out after a few hours, and the other was pulled due to hypothermia after nine hours.

NEM: *Where and when did you land?*

DM: I literally hit the rocks under the lighthouse at Cap Gris Nez, France, at about 2:30 am local time.

NEM: *What was it like swimming in the dark?*

DM: I enjoyed swimming in the dark. The seas calmed and the water warmed up a few degrees around sunset. When it was dark, I stopped looking up to try to see France and concentrated on staying next to my boat.

NEM: *Could you see France at any point during your swim?*

DM: I could only see the lights of Calais off to my left and a lighthouse blinking way off in the distance. I couldn't see land until I

Pool Workout Corner

Want a new routine in the pool? Give this 3,000 yard workout a try!

Warmup	700 yards
400 free	
200 stroke	
100 kick	
Main Set	2,200 yards
3 X 100 breathing 5-7-5-7 by 25, rest :10 to :15	
400 build, rest :30	
3 X 100 distance per stroke, rest :10 to :15	
300 long and strong, rest :20	
3 X 100 50 kick, 50 drill, rest :10 to :15	
200 build, rest :10	
3 X 100 breathing 5-7-7-5 by 25, rest :10 to :15	
100 all out	
Easy cool down for at least 100 yards	100 yards

Total: 3,000 yards



Miller celebrates her crossing near her landing site in France with a local brew.

Photos courtesy of Dori Miller

me and monitoring my condition. My feeding plan went out the window when I was seasick, and they had to make adjustments to find something that worked. They also had to deal with seasickness themselves and cold. They were both with me on my 41K Lake George Marathon swim in June 2007, so they knew my stroke and mood. They knew I was feeling better when my sense of humor came back. They could also tell the pilot what course to take based on my speed. As the swimmer, I give up control and I trust them to make the right decisions for all of us.

NEM: *Since you were in the water for over 10 hours, how and what did you eat and drink?*

DM: I mostly drank hot peppermint tea with a sport gel or CarboPro added. I could not keep down the juice or flat Coke I usually like. I never did eat anything solid, but I didn't really need it.

NEM: *What was the water temperature? Was that cold to you? How did you deal with it?*

DM: For the first few hours, the temperature was about 62 F. It didn't feel cold, but my hands started to get stiff after a few hours. My crew heated my drinks up a little more, and that helped. About halfway, the water warmed up noticeably to 64 F, and I was never cold after that.

NEM: *How did your crew keep track of you in the dark?*

DM: I had two battery operated LED lights attached to me, one on my goggle straps and the other on the back of my suit. Heather could also count my stroke by sound in the dark. My crew also wore lights so I could see them. They attached one to the water bottle so I could find it in the dark water.

NEM: *Did you have any pain at any point in the swim? How did you handle it?*

DM: My left shoulder got a little sore because I was taking the waves from that side. My crew dissolved two Advil in my tea and that did the trick.

NEM News: The New England Masters Swim Club, Inc., Newsletter

Got ideas? Want to contribute stories or announcements? We want to hear from you! Contact Elaine for more information on how you can get your name, club, or event in print!

Elaine Kornbau Howley, Editor

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Visit us online at: www.swimnem.org

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was about 100 yards from the finish. Only then could I make out the dark cliffs in front of me.

NEM: *Who was on your crew and how did they support you?*

DM: My friends, Heather Nicholson and Dave Mak were with me. During the swim, they were in charge of feeding

NEM: *What were the biggest challenges you faced during the swim?*

DM: By far the biggest challenge was the seasickness. I had expected that I would be seasick, but I had not expected it to feel as disorienting as it was. Once we were in the first shipping lane, I couldn't see land anymore. All I could see was water and my boat and both were moving up and down a lot. I had no steady focal point and I started to feel like I was falling, like the feeling that wakes you from a dream. I started to struggle against the waves and I got scared. I felt much better after I donated my lunch to the fishes and gulls.

NEM: *What did you do once you landed on French soil?*

DM: I remember holding onto a rock and looking up at the sky and seeing all these stars. It was so peaceful until a wave tumbled me over the sharp rocks. I found out why they're called Dragon's teeth. Then I realized how dangerous it was and got back to the boat as fast as I could.

NEM: *Did you have any support swimmers in the water with you?*

DM: I didn't, and it wasn't my plan to have anyone swim with me. It would have taken a lot of convincing to get my crew off that boat and into the water with me!

NEM: *What did you learn out there?*

DM: The swim wasn't as hard as I expected it to be because I was well prepared. But the ocean is a wild and amazing place and Mother Nature can kick your butt in a second.



On an extremely windy day, Miller visits the lighthouse at Cap Gris Nez. The weather was harsh during her tide and she was lucky to get a chance to cross.

Upcoming Meets

11/16 Greater Portland Swim Meet (*recognized)

1st Annual Greater Portland Swim Meet to be held at the Riverton Pool (at 1600 Forest Ave in Portland ME) on Sunday November 16th, 2008. Warm up 12pm, start 1pm. Contact Son Nguyen at [207-615-1299](tel:207-615-1299) or snguyen925@yahoo.com.

11/23 Bath YMCA Mini Meet (*recognized)

Bath YMCA, 303 Center Street, Bath, Maine on Sunday November 23, 2008. Warm up: 10:00 AM, Meet Start 11am. Deck entries will be allowed until 10:15am. Pre-registration \$20, deck entry \$25 for five standard events and relays. Contact Robert Nelson at rmelson@clinic.net.

12/12-12/14 NE LMSC SCM Championships at BU (*sanctioned)

2008 NELMSC Short Course Meters Championship and New England Masters Workout Group Challenge to be held at the Boston University Fitness and Recreation Center, Boston MA. Dates and warm up/start times are: Friday December 12, 2008, warm up 4:30, start 5:00 p.m., Saturday December 13, 2008, warm up 9 a.m. start 10 a.m., Sunday December 14, 2008, warm up 9 a.m. start 10 a.m. Contact John Barbary and Ed Gendreau at egendreau@comcast.net.

NEM: *What do you know now that you wish you had known before you started this endeavor?*

DM: The training is a learning process and a journey. I learned a lot from other swimmers and I learned a lot in the Channel. And even though you can be the most prepared person in the world, there is always the unexpected, but those are the things that make this sport so interesting.

NEM: *What advice would you give other swimmers interested in taking on this kind of challenge?*

DM: Don't rush into it. It takes a long time to build up training to handle that kind of distance and the conditions of the channel. Asking other Channel swimmers for advice is great, but you have to learn what works for you. Doing other marathon swims will provide valuable learning experiences for the swimmer and crew. Many swimmers fail because they can't handle the cold water. New England is a great place to train, and you should be in the ocean as much as possible. There are no wetsuits in the Channel!

NEM: *What's next?*

DM: I will definitely go back to the Channel. I am thinking about doing the Manhattan Island Marathon Swim and Santa Barbara channel this year. But right now, I'm taking it easy.

I think it's safe to say that Dori has earned a little down time. Congratulations again, and thanks for sharing your adventure with us!— **Elaine Howley, NEM News Editor**

Howley Crosses Catalina Channel

For all you out there who have been following my swimming this summer, I'm pleased to announce that on September 22nd, 2008, I became the 158th person to successfully complete the 21-mile Catalina Channel crossing in 10 hours, 57 minutes, 44 seconds. I had great conditions, an awesome crew, and an excellent experience. I'd like to extend a hearty thanks to the NEM swimming community for your help, support, and encouragement during this journey. I'll include a more detailed account of my swim in a future issue of *NEM News*. In the meanwhile, check out www.swimcatalina.org for more information about the swim and the fabulous sanctioning body, the **Catalina Channel Swimming Federation**, that ratifies these crossings. There are some truly remarkable swims recorded on that site! —**Elaine Howley, NEM News Editor**



Howley breathes in the channel. Below is the course from Catalina Island to the California mainland.



NEM News also available in full-color on-line at
www.swimnem.org

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- Miller tells how she got to France the hard way
- Simmons, Beede meets produce fast swimmers
- Announcements:
New workout groups
Mini-Meet locations wanted
PenBay to host swim clinic

Contributors: Al Prescott, Rich Axtell, Dori Miller, Bob Boder, Walter Lincoln, Chris Clark & Mindy Williams,