

Tackling Lake Argyle

Masters Swimming Northern Territory Members

More than 15 Masters NT swimmers travelled to the recent Lake Argyle Swim event in the eastern Kimberley region of Western Australia. Regulars at the open water competition, the MSNT swimmers swam both the 20km and 10km event in teams of four and two.

Lake Argyle is 21 times greater in size than Sydney Harbour and home to about 25,000 crocodiles although the locals assure you “they are only freshies” meaning freshwater crocodiles, which show less man-eating tendencies than their saltwater cousins. That thought was comforting for some of the swimmers but the sight of a croc trap at the boat ramp and a small “freshie” lurking near the finish line was a disturbing thought for others. Fortunately, the locals were right and there have been no incidents with the local croc population during the event!

Three teams featuring Darwin Stingers members received line honours – Team BOAT won the 20km duo in record time of 5:04:48; Aquaholics won the 10km quad event 2:17:28; and ; Up for IT placed second in the 20km quad in 5:12:29.

Other teams put in a strong showing despite choppy conditions. In the 20km duo Cat Paddle crossed the line in 6:12:30 and placed fourth while in the 20km quad The Quaffers did their swim in 5:54:34 and placed seventh and Aqualicious placed 11th in 6:30:32.

One Darwin Stingers member has had a particularly impressive few weeks. Bryannon Ruskin, 32, competed at Nationals in Rockhampton winning gold in the 100m and 50m breaststroke as well as five silvers and three bronze medals. With just a week break between Nationals and Argyle, she was able to back up and take part in the 20km duo as part of Team BOAT. Along with MSNT president Adrian Tonkin, Team BOAT not only won the 20km duo but did so in record time.

MSNT congratulates all competitors who attend the Lake Argyle Swim and we hope to see them again in 2015.

Darwin Stingers Newsletter



Masters Swimming NSW members

Lake Argyle was a fantastic place for my first 10-km swim event.

When I first heard about this swim a few years ago, I knew that I would like to do it. I have always loved distance swimming. However, I preferred the flatter open waters than the surf. This swim also catered for the slower swimmers in that it had a reasonable time limit of 5-1/2 hours to complete the swim.



Lake Argyle is a man-made lake – 20 times the size of Sydney Harbour. It was formed by the damming of the Ord River in 1971. The lake, Australia's largest body of fresh water, acts as a reservoir for the irrigation scheme in Kununurra and is home to much wildlife, including freshwater crocodiles. However, none were to be seen whilst doing the swim. They don't like humans and stayed far away from us. It was too warm for them to even surface.

Registrations

When I decided to enter this swim I asked my swimming colleague Jenny Whiteley if she would be interested in doing it with me.

Registrations opened on 1 November at 9.00am Western Australian time. Both Jenny and I were sitting at our computers the minute registrations opened because we had heard it filled quickly the previous year. Just as well we did - all places had been filled within 6 hours of registrations being opened!

Preparation

Yes, one definitely had to prepare for a swim of this nature – plenty of kilometres in the pool and on land. Also some 5-hour open water swims on Saturday mornings.

I had been warned that the lake could become quite choppy. The night before the swim, we were woken up by the sound of wind and rain - quite unseasonal. Having been out on a smooth peaceful lake the day before, I no longer knew what to expect.

Event Day

The people doing the 20km event (teams and solo swimmers) had an earlier start than the 10km swimmers. One of the 20km solo swimmers later told me that the first part of her swim was just as rough as any ocean water swim. However, by the time the 10km swimmers started two hours later, we were told that the winds had more than halved. There was a small amount of chop during the first part of the swim, but it was quite manageable. Water temperature was quite warm for a long-distance swim – about 28 degrees.

The swim was extremely well organised. We were taken by the Lake Argyle boat to the starting buoy together with our paddlers. Kilometre by kilometre my paddler guided me to the next buoy - one more kilometre down. Around the 5km mark, we entered a more sheltered section of the lake and the water was ever so calm. One had to take time to enjoy the magnificent scenery around us whilst we were swimming - a few more kilometres down.

At the 8km mark, my paddler told me that I had just passed another 10-km solo swimmer! Being better at endurance I kept a similar rate for the complete swim, which led to me passing this young lad. In no time I looked up and saw the finishing line – nearly there.

As I crossed the finishing line, there was a feeling of awe that I had achieved this goal. Not only had I achieved this goal, but I had achieved it in a time much less than I expected. I was aiming to complete it between 4.5-5 hours – when I was told my finishing time was 4 hours 17 minutes, I was quite amazed. Jenny completed the swim in 2 hours 27 minutes.

Now, you don't have to be a fast or elite swimmer to have a go. I may have been one of the 'more senior in years' and slowest swimmer on the day – but it was definitely worth the experience.

**Helen Rubin
Ryde, MSNSW**

