

James Pittar

2007 Charity Swims

Using the sponsorship from Alfred Dunhill Limited, I have directly supported two charitable causes this year and indirectly supported two others.

Mr Bourke Gibbons OAM & Jenny Wilcockson

Both these individuals are confined to wheelchairs, and fundraising was aimed at providing new wheelchairs and vans for transport.

Bourke suffers from Cerebral Palsy and has very little movement. He raises money for the Sheppard Centre by selling pens on the Corso at Manly and in Chatswood Shopping Centre. He needs a new van so his carers can transport him to his charity work each day.

Jenny went to Cook Islands to mentor student teachers for a 4 week assignment. Three weeks into the assignment, she was struck down with Hemidystonia and is now confined to a wheelchair with significant twisting of her left side limbs. Jenny has returned to her teaching career on a part-time basis and needs to be able to travel independently to attend her medical appointments and to pursue her teaching career.

Rainbow Club of Australia

The Rainbow Club provides swimming tuition for children with disabilities and an opportunity for their parents to socialise with other parents. There are 11 clubs in NSW, 1 club in Victoria, 1 club in South Australia and 1 club in Queensland. On any weekend there are over 400 children involved in swimming clubs across Australia.

I have been the ambassador of the Rainbow Club since 2001, and Murray Rose is the Patron of the Rainbow Club.

I provided support through the following swims:

Sydney Football Stadium Pool (12.5 KM)

This swim was done on June 2nd 2007 for Mr Bourke Gibbons and Ms Jenny Wilcockson.

Prior to the swim I did radio interviews on both 2GB with Alan Jones and on 2BL(ABC) with Adam Spencer. A press release was sent out to all of the members of the Sydney Cricket and Football Stadium with opportunities to make donations.

The swim took 4.5 hours, and direct donations on the day raised about \$1,000.



James swimming



James with Burke & Jenny

Capitola Pier to Santa Cruz Pier, California, USA (10 KM)

The Pennock Island Challenge, Alaska, USA (13.2 KM)

Cleggan Pier to Inishbofin, Ireland (12.8 KM)

These swims were completed on consecutive weekends in August 2007 to raise awareness and funds for the Rainbow Club.

Capitola Pier to Santa Cruz Pier was done on August 4th

After waiting 2 hours for the fog to lift, I started the swim with my mate, Bernie Burrows, kayaking for me and blowing the whistle to provide directions. We swam through kelp early on in the swim; and as we got close to the Santa Cruz Pier, we had sea lions jumping out in front of Bernie's kayak. I eventually rounded the Santa Cruz pier completing the swim at 12:28pm. The swim took 3 hours to complete with water temperature averaging 15 degrees Celsius.



Leaving Capitola Pier

The Pennock Island challenge was completed on August 12th

My mate and trainer, Matt Logan, kayaked and directed me for this swim. It was a magnificent day with fantastic weather for Ketchikan. The air temperature was 23 degrees Celsius with a very warm 16 degrees water temperature. We had a light 16 km/hour wind from the North West.

This swim was tide affected, being with us for the first 3 hours and dropping away for the last part of the swim. We swam anti clockwise around Pennock Island in the Inside Passage of Alaska. During the swim, a bald eagle came down and took a salmon from the water just near us. The swim took me 3 hours and 39 mins, which placed me at 9th in the 17 person field of individuals. There were also 5 duo teams and 3 teams of 4 people. I had planned to wear a wetsuit for this swim, but as the conditions were so favourable, I did not wear a wetsuit. About half the field did wear wetsuits.

Most of the swimmers were from the USA, there were two international swimmers, myself and a gentleman from Brazil. This swim was to raise money for the American Diabetes Association, so I did 2 radio interviews whilst there for the ADA.

While in Ketchikan, I also had the chance to go on a canoeing trip and do some hiking in a temperate rainforest. We saw a black bear, bald eagles washing themselves in the streams, visited the discovery centre, the hatchery and the totem pole museum.

It was a brilliantly organised swim in a superb location.



James swimming in Alaska

Cleggan Pier to Inishboffin swim on August 18th

Matt Logan supported me on this swim as well. The conditions for this swim were not so favourable there. A 35 knot headwind made swimming very difficult. The planned swim was cancelled; and first alternative, a 7 mile swim from Inishboffin to Inishlyon return, was also cancelled due to the conditions. Finally, it was decided that we would do a 2 mile triangular course in the lee of the Inishboffin Harbour. I completed three laps of this course.

The water temperature was below 15 degrees Celsius, and the air temperature was only 16 degrees with intermittent rain. The second leg of each lap was into the wind, and the last leg of each lap was downwind. The swim started at 12.20pm. and I finished at 3pm. I came 5th out of 20 swimmers and, despite the conditions, decided not to wear a wetsuit.



Matt and James in Inishboffin Harbour

Closing

Thank you for your magnificent sponsorship, it was greatly appreciated. I used \$18000 AUD of \$19200 AUD I received. Once we have finalised the costs I plan to donate the remainder to The Rainbow Club.

My next proposed swim will be in February 2008 from the Sydney Opera House through the Heads to Manly Beach. This will be to raise money for the Fred Hollows Foundation. I will keep you updated.