



Uberman1 2017

I suppose I should be satisfied; I'm not. Completing my second ocean seven swim as part of an ultra endurance race is great but the swim could have been a lot better. Had it gone to plan, my expectations of a 11-14 hour swim were in hindsight realistic. If you are eating while reading this, you better stop. After last years English Channel swim, I came back to the pool and concentrated on my form and efficiency by increasing my glide and roll. I felt much better leading up to the Catalina swim and spent a lot of time, doing night swims by myself. For some reason, not many people like to swim in the ocean at night in Australia.

On October 9th we set out for Catalina Island but about a mile offshore we were involved in a rescue. A guy had fallen overboard off his yacht while having a pee. He had his life jacket on and had been in the water for an hour. He had used his iPhone to flash signals to us to get attention and had called the coast guard (they turned up later). His yacht was behind him, he'd been drinking, the whole event was bizarre.

We got to Catalina an hour later than the scheduled start and I jumped in the water to swim to the beach. I started my swim at 00:43am, conditions were perfect, no wind, the ocean was flat as a

bath tub and water temperature 20°C. The water was too warm and I had to open up my wetty (wetsuit) to flush the water through and cool off. Fed after the first hour then every 45 minutes. At 02:30 I had 5 whales in front of me and had to swim through whale poo for half an hour. At 03:38, 4 more whales swam by, more poo! Swimming good and no problems and then around 5am the dolphins came in to check me out, by 07:10 am there were dolphins everywhere and then at 09:00 the seals joined in. By 11:00 am I had swam 23km but was starting to feel sick and then had my first big throw up, probably due to a combination of Imodium and whale poo. At 11:15 the current was against me and by 13:00 the swell was 3 foot. At this point the Captain tells the kayaker that we were 6.6km from shoreline finish, which for this race was Terranea Resort beach. At 14:00 the conditions were choppy, another chunder and on my way. At 15:00 I had a kayaker change and then everything went wrong. The captain and the kayaker had a big argument, which I didn't find out about till later. The kayaker led me one way and the boat went off 200 yards another way and stopped. I continued swimming 3 hours without a feed or drink and no boat support swimming against the current going nowhere. While I swimming they were still shouting at each other and I didn't know what was going on. My landing beach was in front of me, current and wind against me and the boat 200 yards south of me. There was no way I was going to quit. At 18:47:50 I walked up the beach after timing my entry with the waves rolling in and the large rocks on the shoreline. First thing I did was throw up, I was really exhausted. Another set of lessons learned for marathon swimming. My feeding was good, lots of variety. I now have my own contract requirements for my swimming. Next day my shoulders and arms were good, recovered well, swim training was spot on. I went off on a little bike ride and run after that but I was really sick for the duration of the race. Started as a sinus infection then throat coughing up brown stuff and green stuff. Infection went to my lungs so had to manage that. Soon as I finished and got out of the desert I went to a pet fish shop and bought "Fish Doxi" it's an antibiotic (doxycillin) cheap and works well. Hopefully I'll be swimming like a fish...

The ride was hot and windy, very windy. Dan Bercu the Race Director joined me for some of the ride assessing my speed so that he could gauge my progress. I'll admit this ride was a lot harder than I thought it would and this was because of the wind. Every hill that I had to ride had a head wind against me and that was 20-30

mph. At nighttime it was chilling and because I was not expecting to need my shoe booties, we had to make them with plastic bags and duct tape. Going over the mountains while riding at night, the support vehicle was behind me so I could see the road surface, which was full of cracks. This ride gave my legs an absolute blasting due to the wind resistance. The wind was so strong that when I held my bike from standing position it would blow away.

The run through Death Valley was epic. Rated as one of USA's hardest runs for a reason. Hot dry and unrelenting, the road is long and is the lowest elevation in North America. At the foot of Mount Whitney the race Director Dan, Joined me on the final leg, the climb up the trail. It's a long climb and the thing I appreciated most was that my two eldest children were there to share the moment and learn a life lesson. You have to work hard to achieve your goals and don't be afraid to embrace challenge.

This race has the perfect formula for endurance athletes wishing to test their abilities. But it's not all about the athlete a good support crew is a must, working together as a team, to get the job done. I sincerely thank my support team.