

NU grad will beat the heat in England

By Nick Hodge
Staff Reporter

Swimming has long been used as an escape from hot, dry summer days, but Lincoln's Kris Rutford is determined to take the recreation of swimming one step farther.

Rutford plans to leave for Dover, England on July 23 and attempt to swim the English Channel.

He will not actually make his attempt to cross the channel until sometime between Aug. 5 and Aug. 10., which is when the best tide for making an attempt at swimming the channel will exist.

The channel is 21 miles wide from the point that Rutford will enter the water, Shakespeare Beach in England, to where he will leave it, a point in France that sticks out the farthest. However, tides and currents push swimmers in an S-shape, so the actual distance is between 25 and 30 miles.

To make a legal, recognized crossing of the channel, Rutford had to hire

a boat to guide him across. He also had to pay a fee of authentication to the Channel Swimming Association, which governs all attempted crossings made in the channel.

In order for Rutford's attempt to be called successful, he must walk into the water at Shakespeare Beach, swim across the channel without touching his guide boat and walk out on the shores of France.

Rutford, a 1981 graduate of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and a former member of the Cornhusker swimming team, said the challenge of successfully swimming across the channel has been on his mind for years.

"I've been swimming competitively since I was seven years old," Rutford said. "It's (the channel) there. Swimming the channel has always been at the back of my mind."

Rutford's friend Bob Mizelle successfully swam the channel in 1986.

"Bob partly swam the channel on a dare from myself," Rutford said,

"now I'm doing it on my own dare."

Rutford said he watched Mizelle swim across the channel. He said that experience will be a big advantage when he makes his attempt.

"I was with Bob every step of the way when he did it," Rutford said. "It was a benefit for me to be along at Bob's attempt."

Rutford began training and mapping out his workouts for his channel attempt Sept. 1 of last year. It was important for him to make several lake swims and long swims to get him into perfect condition for the channel, he said.

Rutford opened his training by swimming 50 miles in September and worked himself up to 110 miles in December. He said he was forced to cut back his workouts from January thru April because of his job as an accountant.

"I'm a C.P.A. and our busiest time of the year is from January through April because of taxes," Rutford said, "so I had to back off on my training."

Following the tax season Rutford sped up his training and has since scheduled himself to swim 135 miles

in June. As his workouts have progressed, he has made four four-hour swims and one five-hour swim at Branched Oak Lake. He plans to make a 12-hour swim Saturday.

Rutford said he hopes his swim at Branched Oak will be similar to a channel swim, except the water temperature will be 20-degrees warmer than the channels' 58- to 60-degree temperature.

Rutford said the actual attempt at swimming the channel should take him anywhere from 10 to 20 hours to complete.

"It'll take 10 to 20 hours depending on the weather, reaction to the water, tides and things I have no control over," Rutford said.

To combat the cold water temperature of the channel, Rutford has been forced to gain body weight, he said.

"I've had to put on about 15 to 20 pounds to get heavier for some insulation because the water is so cold," Rutford said.

Rutford plans on having about 10 days in England to complete his training and preparations before actually making his attempt. Wind and rough

water are major factors in making a successful crossing, he said.

"I'll use those 10 or so days while I'm over there to get acclimated to the cold water, as well as the type of water before I make my attempt," Rutford said.

Last year, 30 swimmers successfully made their attempts at crossing the channel. There have been 330 solo crossings in the history of the channel.

Rutford said his swimming experience should be to his advantage in attempting to complete his crossing.

"I'm an experienced swimmer so I have one feather in my hat," Rutford said.

The channel does possess several dangers to those who attempt to swim across it. It is one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world with some 500 ships passing through the channel every day. There is a chance that jellyfish could sting swimmers as they make their way across. The cold water temperature may also cause swimmers to be overcome with hypothermia.

Another threat is that swimmers might be affected by the sea water. The highly concentrated water could cause the swimmers to vomit, or swell their eyes and throat shut.

Rutford said he will wear eye goggles and a full body swim suit to enable him to better protect himself from the water's elements.

Rutford said mental training prior to a channel attempt is almost as important as the physical preparations.

"Preparation by imagination and visualization is really important," Rutford said. "It's a mental thing. You have to concentrate and keep your mind on what you're doing."

"You can't think about how cold or bad the water is. My experience of mentally preparing for big events while I was a swimmer at Nebraska should really help."

Campus Rec Office needs instructors

Vicki Highstreet, the Coordinator of Wellness and Instructional Sports, said the Office of Campus Recreation is looking for instructors to teach a number of classes in the fall semester. The only requirement is the candidate must have current certification in Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation and first-aid.

Water aerobics, low-impact aerobics, beginning aerobics, intermediate aerobics and firmer body classes will be offered. Other classes, such as yoga, may also be offered, Highstreet said.

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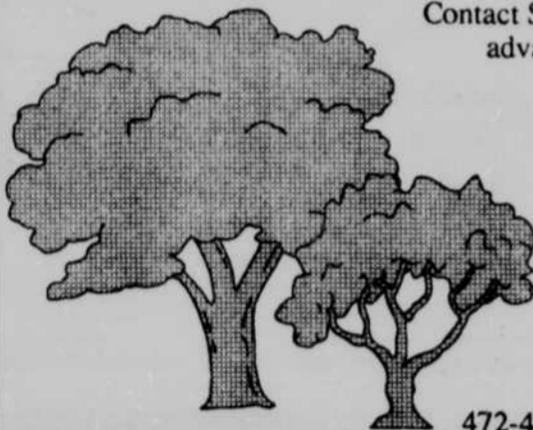
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