

On Saturday, July 29th over 190 swimmers participated in the 2023 St. Vincent's Swim Across the Sound. The 36th Annual Swim consisted of 8 Solo swimmers, 1 two-person relays, 18 Classic (non-wetsuit) relays, 12 Traditional (wetsuit) relays and 2 Corporate Challenge relays. Half of the 34 team relays were first year teams.

The 2023 Swim can be characterized as one of resiliency and trust. With the reality of cutting teams due to boat breakdowns, family emergencies and forecasted weather, we all came together to make this year a huge success!

Swim day started off with a bang as thunder, lightning, and torrential rain welcomed the swimmers and volunteers as they arrived at Captain's Cove at 5am to board the buses to take them to the ferry. By the time the buses came out of the darkness and arrived at the Bridgeport ferry, it was sunshine and calm seas as we traveled to Port Jefferson. The Swim Committee still faced a forecast of fast-moving, very powerful storms in the afternoon. The question became when the storms would come, not if.

The Swim commenced at 8:21 am with the Solo swimmers, Two-Person Team and 4 Team Relays. Due to the predicted weather, starting wave times were condensed from 45 minutes to 30 minutes to enable the entire field swimming as soon as possible - Wave 2 started at 8:46 am and Wave 3 at 9:21am. The conditions seemed almost perfect with the exception of the high water temperature. The Long Island Sound is typically 70-72F in late July, during the Swim reports were water temperatures was high 70's to low 80's.

The Swim Committee acutely followed our weather service and monitored radar of forecasted severe thunderstorms traveling well north of Long Island Sound throughout day. At 5:55 pm, radar picked up the directional change of a very strong and fast moving line of thunderstorms and lightening. The Swim was immediately called with the remaining Solo swimmer and Teams removed from the water. All boats and swimmers were safely onshore when the intense thunderstorm with high winds ripped through Captain's Cove at approximately 7:30 pm.

The first swimmer to cross the finish line was Solo **Joey Nizzardo** (Monroe, CT) with a time of 7:09. This was Joey's first solo marathon swim and 2nd Swim Across the Sound. Joey and **Nikko Price** (Branford, CT), 2nd finisher and 2022 champion, were within a few boat lengths of each other throughout the Swim until Joey overtook Nikko with less than three miles to go. Nikko finished in at time of 7:15. **William Boldt** (San Antonio, TX) was the 3rd Solo swimmer with a time of 8:29. **Chris Spearing** (Fairfield, CT) was the 4th Solo swimmer with a time of 9:12. **Marcella MacDonald, DPM** was our first female Solo in a time of 9:33; **Arleen Gonzalez** was our 2nd female Solo swimmer was removed due to lightening in the area after 9:46. **Benjamin Casey**, who leaves in two weeks to attempt the English Channel after being weathered-out in June, swam for 5 hours and 45 minutes.

The Two-Person Relay category (non-wetsuit) was won by **The Salty Sirens** in a time of 7:55. This team made up of Amy Meskill and Maribeth Robertson. Maribeth also leaves in two weeks for her English Channel attempt, with Amy joining Maribeth in Dover as her crew. What a team!

In the Team Relay categories, just twenty minutes separated the first and fourth place finish in the Classic (non-wetsuit) category: **Water Rats Swimming** was the fastest finisher overall and finished first in the Classic category (7:23). Marist Men's Swimming (6:25) finished in 2nd place, just two minutes behind the leaders. **The Pool Boys** touched out **Fair Diego** in a photo finish (6:43) for 3rd place. **Lehigh** finished 5th (6:58), followed by 6th **All Gas No Breaks** (7:18), 7th **Team RBG** (7:28), 8th **Split Decision** (7:31), 9th **Pisces Pride** (7:33), 10th **UConn Club Swim** (7:48), 11th **Pisces Strong**, 12th **Swim Club UConn**, 13th **UConn Swim Club** (8:04), 14th **Backus for a Cure** (8:05), 15th **The Sound of Water** (8:10), 16th **The Goofy Goobers** (8:32), 17th **Three Men and a Baby** and 18th **Barbara's Bunch**.

In the Traditional category (wetsuits allowed) **The Golden Board Shorts** was 1th in the category in a time of 6:49. **Ironfish** (7:04) finished in 2nd place, followed by **Boo's Crew 3 - Rapids** (7:08) who touched out 4th **Washed Out** (7:08) for 3rd place. Special thank you shout out to 5th place **HOCC Sharks/Black Bears** (8:30) who agreed to combine forces so another team could swim. **Boo's Crew 2 – Rapids** (8:33) finished 6th, followed by 7th **ST Elevations - Hartford Hospital**, 8th **The MK Fan Club** and 9th **Sound Stormers**. **Survivors and Boo's Crew 4 - Rapids** fought hard to make the milestones but were eventually moved up.

The Corporate Challenge category was won by first-year team **Wallingford Energy** (9:01). St. Vincent's Emergency Department team, **Code Blue Fish** (9:03) was 2nd and cannot wait for a rematch next year.

The "Dream of Life" award was presented by his brother and Committee member, Jeff Sargent, to **Greg Sargent** for his commitment and dedication to the Swim Across the Sound. Greg gave a heart-felt speech about impact the Swim has had on him and his family. Greg has participated in the Swim since nearly the beginning. Greg and the Fair Diego teams has fundraised over \$800,000 alone and inspired so many swimmers to participate in the Swim and helped thousands of patients going through cancer through fundraising.

While the Swim provides a venue for swimmers to get in shape, meet new people and create some friendly competition, the success of the Swim Across the Sound is measured by the amount of donations we raise and the number of patients and their families we can help. The 2023 Swim Across the Sound was a huge success, raising over \$455,000 as of Swim Day with more funds coming in each day.

Here are some highlights:

- **FIVE teams raised over \$20,000!**

Boo's Crew 23 (\$29.3k), *Survivors* (\$27.2k) at the top of the leader board, *Boo's Crew 4- Rapids*

(\$22.8k), *Fair Diego* (\$21k) and *Code Blue Fish* (\$20.3k)

- **THIRTEEN teams raised over \$10,000!**

Adding *ST Elevations - Hartford Hospital, Sound Stormers, Wallingford Energy, The Pool Boys, Backus for a Cure, Split Decision, All Gas No Breaks, Washed Up*

- **SIX first-year teams raised over \$10,000!**

ST Elevations - Hartford Hospital, Wallingford Energy, Backus for a Cure, Split Decision, All Gas No Breaks, Washed Up

- **All SOLO swimmers crushed their pledge!**

Marcella MacDonald DPM and *Benjamin Casey* were top 10 fundraisers.

- **Top five individual Fundraisers!**

George Mladi (Boo's Crew 4 – Rapids), Jeremiah Houlihan (Survivors), Jeff Lever (Boo's Crew 23), Danielle Honrath (Fair Diego) and Eric Hodska (Boo's Crew 23)

We are extremely grateful to the boat captains, their crews, Swim Officials, observers, medical support, land volunteers, and kayakers who volunteered for the Swim. The Swim cannot happen without you and all the swimmers that reach out to family member, friends, neighbors, colleagues and strangers to help the patients needing assistance.

We have an amazing team of volunteers on the Swim Committee who work through the year with Karen, Chris, Alyssa, Tara, Frank, Teren, and Todd from St. Vincent's Medical Center Philanthropy Department. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to this event year after year.




With gratitude and admiration for you all,

Liz Fry

Marathon Director

Swim Committee Members: Jim Doyle, Matt Hlavna, Ryan Conrad, Bill Selski, Bill Dragon, Jeff Heisner, Mitch Lasky, Teresa Gagnon and Jeff Sargent.

2023 SWIM Across the Sound Results

SWIM #	Swimmer /Team	Boat Captain	Official Time	Awards
Solo Category - Male				
6	Joey Nizzardo	William Selski	7:09	1st Male
7	Nikko Price	Kevin Blanco	7:15	2nd Male
4	William Boldt	Aaron Hilliard	8:29	3rd Male
8	Chris Spearing	indy Ranga	9:12	4th Male
2	Benjamin Casey	Andrew Haddock	5:45	*
Solo Category - Female				
5	Marcella MacDonald DPM	Paul Ziobo	9:33	1st Female
3	Arleen Gonzalez	Stefan Van Waveren	9:46	2nd Female* 
Two-Person Relay				
9	The Salty Sirens	Bruce Kelly	7:55	1st Two-Person
Classic Relay (No Wetsuits)				
42	Water Rat Swimming	Ron Novick	6:23	1st Classic Relay
33	Marist Mens Swimming	Jack Dobkowski	6:25	2nd Classic Relay
40	The Pool Boys	James Vandehei	6:43	3rd Classic Relay
30	Fair Diego	Thomas Dolan	6:43	4th Classic Relay
32	Lehigh	Brad Arrington	6:58	5th Classic Relay
26	All Gas No Breaks	Peter Shupp	7:18	6th Classic Relay
38	Team RBG	Karl Torbey	7:28	7th Classic Relay
36	Split Decision	Richard Langlois	7:31	8th Classic Relay
34	Pisces Pride	Claude Bloudin	7:33	9th Classic Relay
41	UConn Club Swim	Pedro Mata	7:48	10th Classic Relay
35	Pisces Strong	Todd Disston	7:52	11th Classic Relay
37	Swim Club UConn	Karl Dombroski	7:56	12th Classic Relay
24	Uconn Swim Club	Michael Enders	8:04	13th Classic Relay
14	Backus for a Cure	Carlos Simmerling	8:05	14th Classic Relay
22	The Sound of Water	Rick Andrews	8:10	15th Classic Relay
20	The Goofy Goobers	Kennedy Carr	8:32	16th Classic Relay
23	Three Men and a Baby	Tim Dent	9:16	17th Classic Relay* 
10	Barbara's Bunch	Daniel Dunmire	9:46	18th Classic Relay* 
Traditional Relay (Wetsuits Allowed)				
39	The Golden Board Shorts	Howard Musk	6:49	1st Traditional Relay
31	Ironfish	Rick Condit	7:04	2nd Traditional Relay
29	Boo's Crew 3 - Rapids	Chris McHugh	7:08	3rd Traditional Relay
25	Washed Up	Jim Allen	7:08	4th Traditional Relay
11	HOCC Sharks/Black Bear-ies	Chris Dewart	8:30	5th Traditional Relay
28	Boo's Crew 2 - Rapids	Andrew Smith	8:33	6th Traditional Relay
18	ST Elevations - Hartford Hospital	Eric Smullen	9:16	7th Traditional Relay* 
21	The MK Fan Club	Leif Vik	9:16	8th Traditional Relay* 
12	Sound Stormers	Andrew Vernon	9:46	9th Traditional Relay* 
19	Survivors	Carl Swebilus	8:10	*
16	Boo's Crew 4 - Rapids	Randall Baldwin	7:46	*
15	Boo's Crew 23	Rick Belenchia	DQ	Safety Rule Violation
Corporate Challenge				
13	Wallingford Energy	John Decker	9:01	1st Corporate Challenge**
17	Code Blue Fish	Carl Storm	9:03	2nd Corporate Challenge

* Official time in the water at point of removal due to missed milestones, time of day, or other reasons. Place awarded by location on course.

** New Course Record for **Port Jefferson to Blackrock Harbor Lighthouse Course** implemented in 2021 Swim Across the Sound.

The 2023 SWIM Across the Sound was called at 5:56 pm due to radar reports of lightening in the area.