

STARTING LINES

Edited by
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BUZZ • FACES • PLACES • STUFF



BRENDAN CAPELL AND ALAN MORELLI

OPTIMISSPORT DISTANCE SWIM CHALLENGE

DATE: Saturday, October 16, 2010

ROUTE: Manhattan Beach Pier
to Santa Monica Pier

INDIVIDUAL DISTANCES: 12.6, 4.8, 2.4
or 1.2 miles

RELAYS: Four-leg, 4.8 miles
or eight-leg, 12.6 miles

RELAY TEAM LIMIT: 100

CHARITIES: Heal the Bay and
Exceeding Expectations

**CONTACT INFORMATION
AND REGISTRATION:**
distanceswimchallenge.com

BACK IN THE SWIM

Alan Morelli brings a big-time open-water event to Southern California

It was April of 2009. Alan Morelli, a wrestler during his college days at Rutgers in New Jersey and later an age-group triathlete, was riding his bike down Mulholland Drive when a motorcyclist made an illegal U-turn right in front of him. "The next thing I knew I was being transported by helicopter to the UCLA Trauma Center," he recalls. "While I was going through rehab, that's when I had the idea."

Morelli's idea, obviously influenced by the swimming he was doing during his rehabilitation, was to create a long-distance swim in Los Angeles. "I was determined, one way or another, to recover from the injuries," he says. "I had been one of the faster guys in the pool before the accident and suddenly I had trouble going 25 meters in the pool, even with a snorkel."

Looking out the window from his home one day, Morelli decided that he would swim across Santa Monica Bay. "My friends thought I was crazy at first, but then they started telling me they wanted to join me. The thought was that

we might inspire others to pursue their own fitness goals with a fundraising event."

Marcellus Wiley, a former NFL Pro Bowl lineman and ESPN commentator, has already committed to a 4.8-mile relay. Professional triathlete Katya Meyers plus top open-water swimmers Ky Hurst and Brendan Capell have also signed up to inspire people to take that first stroke.

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—Alan Morelli

Those swimming shorter distances, like 1.2 miles, will cross the same finish line as the ultra-distance swimmers. "Unlike other open-water events, ours will run parallel to the shore and we'll go from the Manhattan Beach Pier to the Santa Monica Pier," Morelli says. "Athletes will have to come in and out of the surf a total of eight times in the 12.6-mile event. This could be very challenging if we have any current or big waves."

In any case, the man who couldn't swim 25 meters a year ago will be joining in on the fun and participating in the 12.6-miler.

"I think open-water swimming is going to be big," he insists. "There are millions of marathoners and triathletes, but only a few thousand people in the world have swum more than eight miles. It's cool to be one of them; but it would be even cooler to inspire others to set their own goals and just do whatever they can do. We need to do something and this event is one way we plan to make a difference." —BB CM

Photo courtesy of Skyscraper Productions



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"Most people lose their concentration after about five hours. They give up. It's not physical, it's mental. When you come to Kona it's like racing on the moon."

Six-time Ford Ironman World Champion Dave Scott