

Mighty Mac Swim

Michigan Open Water Championship

Swimmer Rules & Safety Guidelines

1. Only 84 swimmers will be permitted to partake in the Mighty Mac Swim. Swimmers must pre-qualify by filling out a pre-qualification form that can be downloaded from the website (www.MightyMacSwim.com). The pre-qualification form is simply intended to provide evidence that the prospective participant has the ability to safely swim across the Straits of Mackinac. 83 qualified swimmers will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis, and the final (84th) spot will be auctioned to the highest qualified bidder to benefit Military Veterans & First Responders through Habitat for Humanity of Michigan. For auction rules, please click the link on the website's "The Swim" page, where these "Rules & Safety Guidelines" are also listed.
2. The Mighty Mac Swim is a professionally timed race.
3. Gold, Silver and Bronze trophies will be awarded for 1st through 3rd place in both the male and female divisions.
4. Exclusive \$3,000 corporate sponsors of swimmers who earn a place on the winner's podium, receive a "Mighty Mac Corporate Cup" for their company showcase.
5. Medals will be awarded to all successful finishers.
6. There are no age divisions.
7. Swimmers must be at least 18 years of age on the date they sign an entry form to participate in the Mighty Mac Swim.
8. Swimmers must wear the numbered swim cap provided in their event packet over the top of any other cap they may be wearing. Swimming caps are also color-coded by gender.
9. Wearing a wetsuit is mandatory. Tech suits are not allowed. Average water temperature range is mid-50s to lower 60s (degrees Fahrenheit). Even if water temperatures are unseasonably warm, strong currents may have you swimming much longer than anticipated to stay on course.
10. Wearing an orange open water buoy/dry bag is mandatory, will be numbered to match the participant's swim cap, and will be provided by the Event. It is the swimmer's choice whether to carry anything in the apparatus in tow (i.e. nutrition, extra goggles, neoprene cap, gloves, booties, solar blanket). Holding on to the open water buoy-dry bag to feed is the only time a swimmer may legally hold on to anything for support without being disqualified. Obviously, it is encouraged for a distressed swimmer to hold on to their buoy if needed, in a dangerous situation, although once pulled from the water, the swimmer is disqualified.
11. No propulsion devices are allowed (i.e. fins, paddles, webbed gloves).

12. No MP3 players or audio devices of any kind are allowed during the swim. Swimmers must be able to hear Lifeguard whistles, boat horns and motors, sirens, directions being yelled to them with or without a bullhorn, etc.
13. The swim route starts at Colonial Michilimackinac State Park on the southwest side of the Mackinac Bridge. Participants swim to the west side of the bridge, in an approximate 50-yard wide swim lane formed between the bridge (to their right) and the line of Support Boats (to their left). Just near the finish, swimmers and Support Boats will veer further to the west, and finish at Bridge View Park on the northwest side of the bridge. Swimmers should always swim on the starboard side (right side) of Support Boats, and should attempt to stay within the 50-yard swim lane. Leniency may be shown by Support Boat Captains for swimmers wandering a little off course within reason, and Captains may choose to steer swimmers back on course. However, swimmers may be disqualified for wandering far outside the 50-yard perimeter of the swim route, at the discretion of Boat Captains or any Event authority, if the swimmer demonstrates that they cannot win the battle against a strong current.
14. As stated above, swimmers must swim to the side of Support Boats. Drafting behind a boat is illegal. A swimmer caught drafting will be warned once, and disqualified if incurring a second infraction. This will be enforced by Lifeguards or any Event official.
15. Drafting behind swimmers will not be monitored in this race. However, swimmers are encouraged to be ethical, and not make contact with other swimmers.
16. Even if swimmers have already checked in and received their Check-in packet at the Swimmer Informational Luncheon, swimmers **MUST** still check in the morning of the swim so they are accounted for.
17. Swimmers will check in at the Check-In tent located near the road, just east of the main parking lot for Michilimackinac State Park, in Mackinaw City. At Check-In, please have any baggage (that you won't be taking with you on the swim) tagged with your swim cap number. Swimmers may store personal items in a locked Grand Cherokee stationed in a parking space nearest Check-In, where a Staff person will be there to assist you. These items may be retrieved at the finish line by showing your swim cap. **Please exercise patience when retrieving your baggage.** Swimmers should be sure to take what they need with them for the swim to the starting line on the beach at the foot of the Mackinac Bridge, stored in their inflated open water buoy/dry bag, and should affix timing chips to both ankles. Timing chips may be tucked under wetsuits. Swim cap numbers will be assigned after the final fundraising deadline, and will appear next to your name on the website's "The Swimmers" page, and may also be found on the "Swimmer Roster," found in swimmer packets. Help is always available from Check-In personnel.
18. Swimmers must stay on the sandy or rocky beach areas at the starting and finish lines. Do not wander into grassy areas where endangered bird and plant species may exist.
19. Following the Opening Ceremony, there will be a countdown and mass start at the sound of the horn. Swimmers may start from the water behind the anchored red buoy. The bottom is rocky, at both the start and finish, so surf shoes may be considered (and then stored in your buoy/dry bag). A lead Support Boat will stay in front of the leading swimmer, and a trailing Support Boat will follow the last swimmer. Our Mobile Medical Boat will be on call, and roam the swim route to the outside of the Support boats, along with a U.S. Coast Guard Patrol Boat and Michigan State Police Dive Team Boat. All Support Boats will have a certified Lifeguard aboard, and will move along with the swimmers appropriately as the athletes spread out. The Mighty Mac Support Boat

fleet has all USCG-certified Charter Captains, and the capability to hold all swimmers. There will also be a Media Boat with a Race Monitor (tracking swimmer's progress to be announced for the crowd on shore), operating at a safe distance from the swimmers.

20. Support Boats will steer clear of all swimmers. If a rescue is being made within the swimming route, lifeguard whistles, boat horns, and possibly megaphones and / or loud speakers will warn swimmers that one or more boats are entering the swimming route for a rescue. In this scenario, swimmers should clear of the area, paying special attention to stay clear of all boat propellers.
21. For safety reasons, swimmers are encouraged to get on a support boat whenever they feel their health or safety is in question. A swimmer may not re-enter the water once boarding a boat, as they have been disqualified. The only exception would be if Boat Captains temporarily order swimmers on boats (following USCG orders) to avoid commercial traffic in the shipping lane. Athletes will resume swimming once the shipping lane is clear, however they must re-start from behind the green shipping buoy at the beginning (south side) of the shipping lane. While this possibility would not likely affect all swimmers equally (i.e. swimmers who have already passed the red buoy, marking the north side of the shipping lane, and are thereby no longer in the shipping lane), and could affect the outcome of the race, this is a known obstacle in the Straits of Mackinac, and contribute to making this swim unique. The arrival times of ships passing through the Straits will be known that morning, will be announced at the Starting Line, and may contribute to a swimmer's racing strategy (i.e. "go all out" from the beginning, or if fighting a very strong current, pace yourself at the beginning, and a rest on the boat could be just what a swimmer needs for a strong finish. Information on currents and water temperatures will also be given at the starting line.
22. Any decision made by an event official, medical professional, or member of a water rescue team related to a swimmer's ability to safely continue is FINAL. The USCG Patrol Command has the utmost authority to make event decisions related to safety.
23. While every attempt will be made to hold the swim as planned, Acts of God (i.e. adverse weather and/or lake conditions) or acts of terrorism could delay or force cancellation of the event. Once the swim is underway, there will be no re-starting the event. If the event is cancelled, there will be no refunds, but participants will receive the satisfaction of knowing they have helped a great cause (Habitat for Humanity of Michigan).
24. If a swimmer is in distress and in need of assistance, please hold on to your buoy, and **PLEASE RAISE YOUR HAND OVER YOUR HEAD AND WAVE TO GET A SUPPORT BOAT'S ATTENTION!**
25. The Lifeguard will blow their whistle in two short tweets to get the attention of a swimmer, and will blow their whistle in one or more long tweets in the event of a distressed swimmer needing assistance or rescue.
26. The finish line will be clearly marked with two finish line "feather-style" banners and / or a large finish line arch (wind permitting). There will also be a large triangular-shaped buoy in the water just to the west/left of the finish line (setting finish line coordinates for the Support Boats). Swimmers must climb a small embankment, before crossing two timing mats (a few yards above the embankment), to officially finish (between the banners and / or arch). The support boats will maintain their plotted course, and attempt to lead the swimmers to the finish line in the most direct route possible. If you want to set your GPS for the finish line, the coordinates are **(Latitude: 45°50'48.03"N Longitude: 84°43'36.38"W)**. Be advised that strong currents in

the Straits of Mackinac may add significant extra effort to stay on course in this 4-statute mile swim. Please note that official swimming times are only recorded when an athlete crosses the actual finish line mats, after emerging from the water. A swimmer may not land in another location, and walk to the finish line. The Mighty Mac finish line paramedics will assess the swimmer's condition after crossing the second timing mat at the finish line.

27. There is a six-hour cutoff time to finish the swim. Swimmers will be disqualified and pulled from the water six hours after the official starting time.

28. Watercraft crew, Lifeguards, Paramedics aboard our Mobile Medical Boat, Finish Line Paramedics, the ambulances standing by on both shores, and of course the U.S. Coast Guard and Michigan State Police Dive Team are all highly trained and will keep a diligent watch to keep you safe. However, there is no replacement for using common sense to make proper decisions.