

# Great Chesapeake Bay Swim

June 9, 2019

**COURSE REVISION.** Conditions changed rapidly 24 hours before GCBS 2019 when LIN-MARK emailed everyone that Chuck Nabit, the race director, determined that safety concerns dictated that the event be shortened to a 2.2-mile course without the swimmers having to swim 4.4-miles across the bay. The newly designed 2.2-mile clockwise triangular course started and finished on the eastern shore of the bay close to Hemingway's. The revised event did not consist of two cycles of the One Mile Bay Challenge that was conducted earlier that morning.

During the event on June 9, 2019, there was a steady 26 mph wind from the ENE, which would have significantly hindered swimmers trying to cross the bay. In addition, heavy rainfall throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed in the weeks before the event increased the intensity of the predicted tides (as for the 2018 Bay Swim). During GCBS 2016, there was a 25 mph wind from the WNW that pushed swimmers towards the finish. Chris Parlin, the safety fleet coordinator, said that experience from the 2016 event—where they had to rescue the kayaker volunteers— informed their decision to modify the 2019 event. This is the first time in the long history of the Bay Swim that the course did not cross the bay.

The 700-yard bridge causeway created a rather sheltered cove area, and the first and third legs of the triangular course were mildly choppy. The second leg of the course was beyond the protection of the causeway and north into the strong headwind. The battering waves presented a nice challenge to the swimmers and made the event a good open-water experience.



**WETSUITS.** Since GCBS 2009, swimmers enter the start area at Sandy Point through two different gates—one for wetsuit wearers and one for swimmers not wearing wetsuits—where their timing ankle chips are scanned by separate beach mats to record who's wearing a wetsuit. A list of the non-wetsuit finishers is provided by LIN-MARK with the event results to document those swimmers completing the swim without the wetsuit advantage.

On June 9, 2019, the change of the event course, distance, and venue in under 24 hours made the use of separate entrance gates in the limited space available impractical. However, the finish-line videos posted on YouTube of all who completed the event along with the finishing photos by Enduro Photo allowed for the easy identification of all non-wetsuit wearers. The correlation of swimmers with their finishing times and visible BIB Numbers was unambiguous.