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About this capture

6 captures

23 Aug 2012 - 21 Jan 2013

Home

Blog

The Swim

Diana

Press

Support Us

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AUG 20

Posted 7:43pm

Making Herstory Using History



photo Christi Barli

Monday 7:15pm EST 51:32 Swim time

Making herstory using history

Approaching the 40th hour of The Nyad swimming, her McGyver-like team has spent the afternoon improvising ways to prevent hypothermia and further swelling of Diana's lips and tongue. As on any faraway expedition, you can only use what's at hand and hope you have what you need. Will tell you later about the desperate "remedies" the team is calmly employing to try to keep Diana's lips from swelling even more than they are already. But right now the priority is to stave off hypothermia (the body's core temperature lowering to dangerous levels).



photo Christi Barli

Anyone thinking Who can't stay warm swimming in 85 degree water? has not witnessed what it's like out here for Diana. The body's core temperature is 98 degrees, and yesterday The Nyad was measured at 97.5. That's good. But there's been some shivering, both last night and today. That's because there's that risky difference of 13 degrees between the water and her core temperature, which over time will reduce the latter. She needs to keep warm, but how?

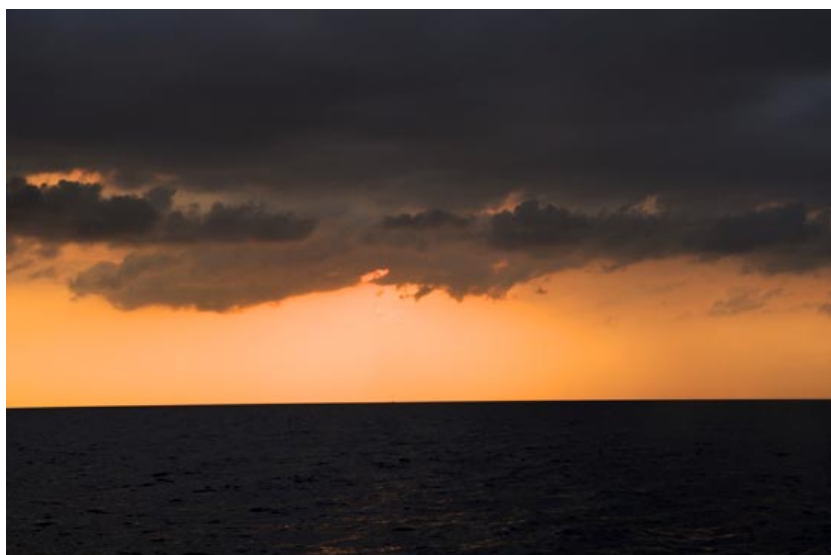


photo Christi Barli

Years ago, marathon swimmers smeared themselves with axel grease, which is black, to attract the sun in an attempt to hold the heat of the day against their skin during the cooler night. Diana's team brought lanolin for Diana to smear under her bathing suit straps, etc., to reduce the inevitable friction of repetitive arm strokes. Monday afternoon, Diana's team got an idea: they put black food coloring into that jar of lanolin to turn it into the "axel grease" of old, and are having Diana apply it to her bare skin while the sun is out, so it stores the heat and she can enter into the evening hours with a body temperature warmer than it is now. It's like, a car painted black with the sun beating down on it becomes hotter inside than a car painted white; darker colors absorb the heat.



photo Christi Barli

A way to fashion the lanolin they have on hand into this historical device with simple food coloring, hopefully this will keep The Nyad warmer through the night and stave off hypothermia. Because that 14 degree differential between her temperature and that of the water gets exponentially more serious with each additional hour she spends in the water, dropping her core temperature. The medical team on board will be on watch.

The risk is great with someone with such a strong will. As observer and marathon swimming historian Steve Munatones said this afternoon, "The mind is always stronger than the body. In distance swimming, there's a point where the mind can handle things that the body cannot."

Regardless of the incredible shape Diana's training put her in, 30 plus years ago as well as now, Diana has historically been known as much for her mind as for her athleticism. We all know her mind can handle it. But there will always be a point where a human body can't go any farther. What no one knows is where that line is drawn in Diana Nyad.

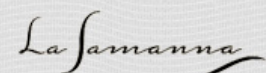
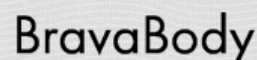
--Candace Hogan aboard Quest



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