

Paddleboarding into History

Once in a while you hear about someone who, for some reason, decides to push themselves to extraordinary levels. Californian paddleboarder, Kevin Eslinger is such an individual. Born in 1963, his primary passion is surfing and his love affair with paddlboarding stems from an attraction to its inherent beauty and symmetry, and the way in which it moves through water.

In 2002, Kevin paddled 73 miles from San Clemente Island to Ocean Beach California. Until he attempted his epic 100 mile paddle, the world record for the longest continuous paddle was 90 miles.

Santa Barbara Island to Ocean Beach - 101 Nautical Miles

'After three years of planning and 18 months of distance dedicated training, I began my attempt at 100 nautical miles at about 3.30pm on Friday September 2nd 2005. Since Santa Barbara Island has nowhere to land, I slipped off of the boat, paddled out past the spot where the GPS read 100, turned around and went.

The first five hours were the most fun I've ever had on a paddleboard. Picking up the small (1-2ft) but very organized bumps that were rolling up behind me, I

managed to average 4.6kts. Very soon after dark it became apparent I was not making the same sort of progress. For the next 10 1/2 hours I couldn't get the board over 3kts. Not realizing that I was paddling directly into a 1.5-2kt current was extremely frustrating and I had to fight off a lot doubts I was having regarding my training, nutrition and my mental preparation. A couple of hours after sunrise, having covered 40 miles, we broke into blue water and broke free of the current.

Until the 75 mile mark, I was able to hold a 4.2kt average. At that point we ran into another current, but only half as strong as the first one. We broke free of that with about 10 miles to go, just before my second sunset on the board and just after a pod of dolphins gave us a close escort for about 10 minutes. By that time the tank was pretty near empty and the

finish became a rollercoaster of eat-paddle-fade-eat. The lights of the Ocean Beach Pier finally got brighter and bigger, and I crossed the tip of it shortly after 9pm. A small group of fantastic friends' hoots and cheers buoyed me in through the surf and I wobbled up the sand, very thankful to be done. The GPS read 101, the time 29h31m. I was hoping to be four or five hours faster than that but no matter, I was finished.

I could not have done this without the aid and support of a lot of incredible people. Mike Eaton and Gary Bond for the board that was up to the task, and the belief that this could be done. My crew; my Dad George, who was my greatest supporter and captained the boat. And my friends: Becky Jackman, who fed me and never slept, Brad Lally, who helped drive the boat, and Bob Christiansen, who played and sang for hours from the foredeck. A Huge thanks to my great and generous friends Keith and Judy Melville who loaned me their boat for this adventure. I would also like to express my gratitude to everyone that shared positive energy with me both before and after.'

It was estimated that Kevin paddled an incredible 88,500 strokes on this journey and consumed 20 litres of a carbohydrate drink, 6 litres of water, ate a dozen Powerbars, 24 energy gels, 5 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and 3 cheese and mustard sandwiches!



Kevin has coached and assisted the following athletes in their own swimming endurance challenges and record breaking times.

1988	David Clark	English Channel	10h17m
1996	Carol Sing	Catalina Channel	10h31m
1999	Carol Sing	English Channel	12h28m
2001	Becky Jackman	Catalina Channel	10h30m
2001	Becky Jackman	Maui Channel	3h51m
2002	Becky Jackman	English Channel	12h24m
2003	Carol Sing	Loch Ness [DNF]	2h40m @ 51degr
2005	Carol Sing	Straits of Gibraltar	7h02m