

Published October 27th, 2010

Orinda Aquatics Moves from the Pool to the Bay

Submitted by Julie Carlson



OA swimmers participating in the open water swim included (left to right), Front row: Robbie Ashby, Devin Kennedy, Sven Campbell, Riley Kalbus; Middle row: Megan Howard, Jenna Haufler, Steven Stumph, Megan Fuqua, Talbot Jacobs; Back row: Ariel Thomas, Samantha Swinton Photo Julie Fuqua water event in the last year.

Two other OA boys, Steven Stumph and Sven Campbell, placed second and third, respectively, to sweep the men's 13 -18 age group. All five girls and six boys from OA competed in the 13-18 age group and all placed in the top 20. Several members of the OA Masters group participated as well, with swimmer Ramey Stevens winning her age group.

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Swimming in a temperature controlled, chemically calibrated pool is something many Lamorinda children do every summer. Swim team participants measure their progress in timed laps and flip turns, under the watchful gaze of parents, coaches and clipboard-wielding stroke and turn judges.

But for 11 members of the year-round Orinda Aquatics team, those reliable markers of progress gave way to a different kind of swimming experience on Sunday, October 17th.

Parents gathered on beaches and watched as their children participated in the 11th Annual RCP Tiburon Mile Open Water Swim. Approximately 657 total swimmers from 10 countries finished the race. Open water swimming presents new challenges to these already accomplished athletes.

Training for this event began with a talk by open water swimming expert Rick Arnason and continued with practices in San Francisco Bay before the swimmers were ready to tackle the waters between Angel Island and Tiburon.

Robert Ashby, 17, placed first in his age group and 26th overall on Sunday.

"My first open water swim was in a lake, but the bay makes a lake look easy!" said Ashby, who was participating in his second open