



BEYOND THE LINE

INTRODUCTION TO SWIMRUN



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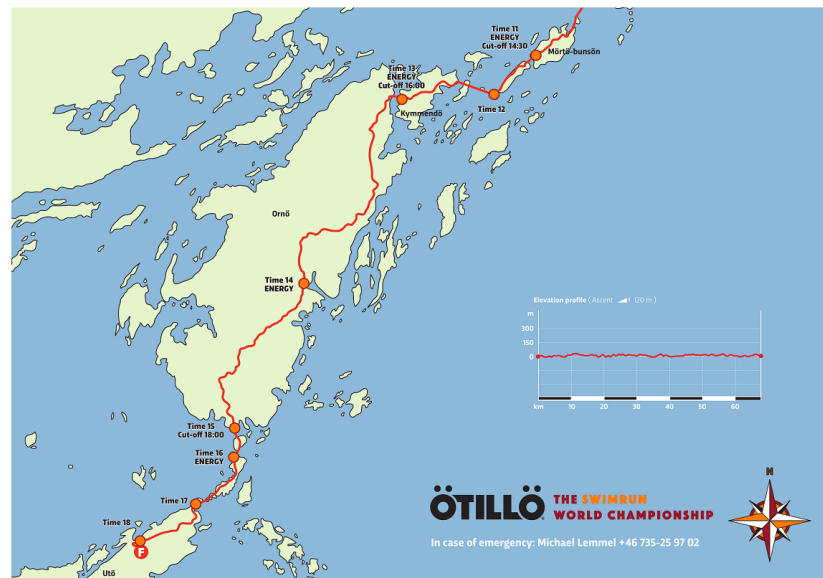
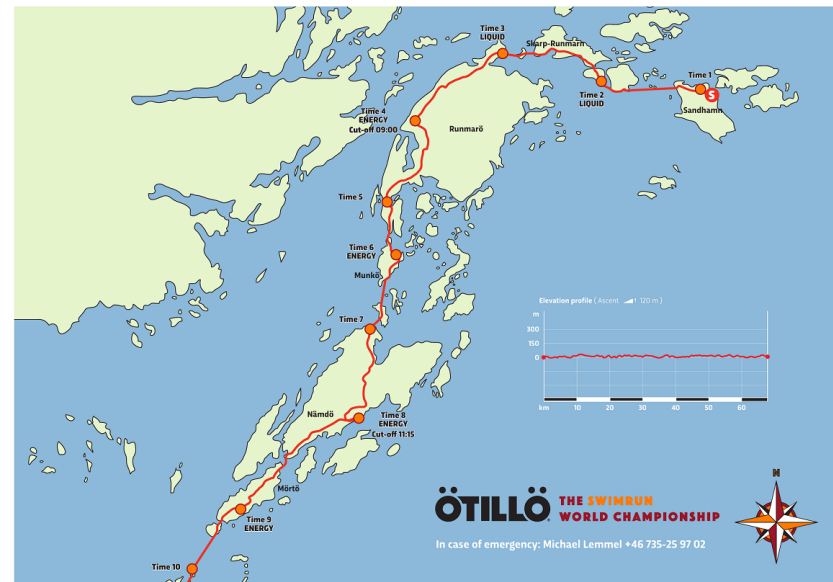
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What is Swimrun?



The founding myth

- In 2002, after too many beers, a group of four friends decided to cross the Stockholm archipelago from Sandhamn to Utö
 - It took them more than 26h to finish this
- In 2006, two adventure racers, Michael Lemmel and Mats Skott, took over the project and turned it into a race, calling it Ötillö (island to island in Swedish)
 - That year, 6 teams started, 2 finished
- In 2012, 3 other races appeared in Sweden, and the sport of Swimrun was officially born



Evolution over the last decade

- Ötillö has become a brand, just like Ironman, Challenge and XTerra, with races in:
 - Sweden (the World Championship), Switzerland*, Croatia*, Germany, UK, France (in Cannes, near Nice!)
- Other racing brands have appeared (Breca, Aquaterra, Sky)
- Distances are not standardized, probably will never be
- Individual races have increased, sometimes in parallel with team races
- Gear is evolving, with still room for improvement
- Hot weather races have multiplied, with different dynamics
- Ultras and explorations are nascent, with good potential
- Growth is still slow in the US (Slowtwitch: Herbert Krabel)
- Oceania and Asia have potential

Team Sandhamm, winner in 2006



Evolution over the last decade

- A new sub-culture, a new breed of athletes, a flavor of adventure
 - Just like triathletes in the 90ies
 - In Europe, some athletes only do Swimrun
- Record-breaking performances every year (now sub 8h at the WC)
- A new industry, still in movement
 - Very few of the usual sports brands are present, leaders keep changing
- Training methods and coaches are starting to appear
- A sport in itself

Current races panorama

- Trade marks are being built
 - Current leaders: Ötillö, Breca
- France has become the biggest market, recently overtaking Sweden
- 400 races worldwide in 2017
- In Hong Kong, Terramar has been doing series since 2017, and the 7th race is coming up on May 19th in Stanley

Why you should do Swimrun



Swimrun and triathlon

- Swimrun comes from adventure racing, it is a different mindset, closer to nature
- Swimming: several swims, of different lengths and different difficulties, often in cold water
 - 12-13 degrees water is not uncommon in European races
 - Overall, swims are harder than in triathlon
 - Only for confident swimmers, except for certain races
 - HKG races are fine!
- Running: several runs, 90% on trail, usually shorter than in long distance triathlon
 - Overall, triathlon runs feel harder (tired legs!)
 - Trail portions are in general very manageable
 - apart from the WC

Swimrun and triathlon

- No transition area (NOT an aquathlon):
 - You swim with shoes on: BIG deal!
 - You run with goggles, cap and buoy: lesser problem
- Multiple changes of sports (46 changes at WC)
- Often a team sport: different dynamics
- Difference in temperature between both sports

Specific skills

- Decent open water skills:
 - Confidence and experience
 - Sighting, reading current
 - Be able to swim ‘rough’, with a lot of gear on
 - Be able to swim tired/exhausted
 - If in Europe, need to be cold-resilient
 - Swimming with a cord in team races is a skill!
- Decent trail running skills:
 - Be able to run tired, with a lot of gear on

Specific skills

- Transitioning:
 - Constant change of sports, from horizontal to vertical and vice versa
- Managing your gear:
 - Find what works for you, look for the best compromise, think about the transitions too
- Mental toughness:
 - Nature has no mercy!

Profile of the best swimrunners

- Outstanding swimmers, more than in triathlon
- Team players (for team races), with the right partner (different strategies)
- Rough guys and gals: best in the World are Swedish soldiers!
- At this stage, cold countries athletes are the best in the World, but this will change

Training and racing



Training and racing: gear

- Gear: remember the challenges
- Challenge 1: swim with shoes on -> your feet drown like stones and kill your balance when you kick
 - Modified pull-buoy
 - Modified neoprene shorts
 - Specific buoyant gaiters
 - Shoes with little water absorption
 - Paddles for better traction

Training and racing: gear

- Challenge 2: run with swim gear
 - The pull-buoy issue
 - The swim buoy issue
 - The paddles issue
 - The pockets issue
 - The temperature issue

Training and racing: training logistics

- Specific challenge for training: nutrition and hydration
 - Camel back or equivalent are out of question for swimming, as you're not likely to find water or food on the trail run portions
 - Ex: the logistics of a Swimrun training sessions on Chi Ma Wan peninsula on Lantau island
 - HKG Island and Sai Kung are more manageable for training

Training and racing: training tips

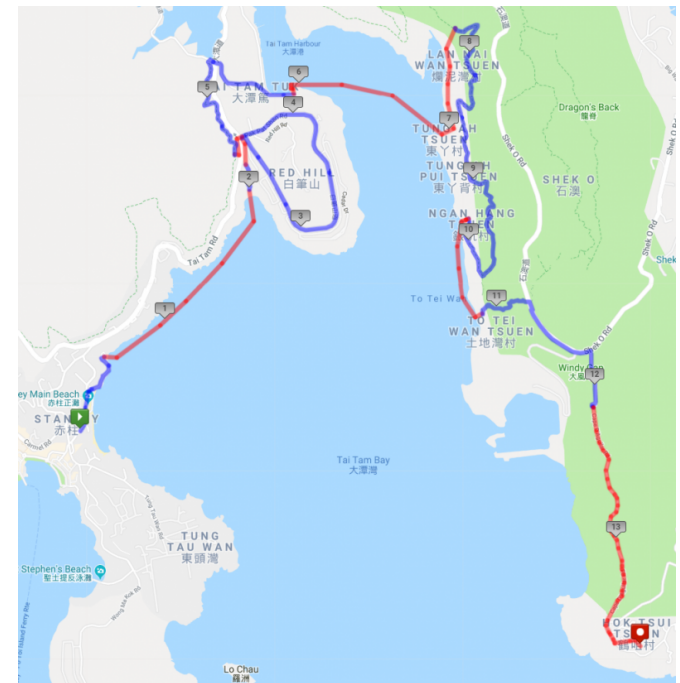
- Practice with your gear, even more than in triathlon
- Practice transitions: multi-bricks
- Practice swimming pool and Open Water swims, more than in triathlon
- Run on road and trails
- Use Swimrun as X-training, in between two seasons, you will gain strength from it
- Strength training helps a lot, as well as mobility drills (animal crawls especially) and balance drills (TRX, Bosu, cables)
- Get dirty, try different weather conditions, toughen up!

Resources

- <http://terramar.hk/events/swimrunhkisland-2/>
 - Our local race, sign-up now!
- <https://www.facebook.com/Swimrunasia/>
 - FB page initiated by Olivier Baillet and Olivier Courret
- <http://owshk.weebly.com/>
 - FB page of the Open Water Swimmers of HKG. Introduction to Swimrun practice EVERY Saturday at 1:15pm. Join us and try!
- <https://otilloswimrun.com/races/otillo/>
 - Ötillö official page
- <https://beyondthelinecoaching.com/shop/>
 - Our online shop for Colting Swimrun gear
- <https://beyondthelinecoaching.com/2016/01/15/first-swimrun-in-hong-kong/>
 - First Swimrun in HKG experience: blog

Resources

- <http://terramar.hk/events/swimrunhkisland-2/>
- Coming race in HKG!
- May 19, 2019
- 14k in total
- 3.2k of total swimming
- 3 swims, 4 runs
- Starts near Stanley



19 May 2019

Total : 14km



Why I believe in Swimrun in HKG

- Right setting: open water and trails in HKG are incredible, temperature allows to train all year long, trails often finish at beaches
- Right community: endurance athletes from different sports, of all levels
- Right timing: come-back to nature feeling, and triathlon glory is fading a bit (plus, the danger of cycling in HKG)

Let's practice!

- Try the gear
 - Swim with shoes
 - Run with swim gear
- The art of transition
- Open Water swimming in rough conditions



BEYOND THE LINE



+(852) 9850 0761



olivier@beyondthelinecoaching.com



www.beyondthelinecoaching.com

