

35-MILE SWIM FROM WASHAGO ON LAKE COUCHICHING

TO BARRIE ON LAKE SIMCOE

AUGUST 23-24, 1991

25 HOURS, 8 MINUTES

Washago-Barrie swim dicey, but successful

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By BOB BRUTON
of The Examiner

This time nothing was going to stop Bob Weir.

The 48-year-old Toronto native waded ashore at Barrie's Centennial Beach at 4:00 p.m. Saturday, exactly 25 hours after he began his 55-km swim from Washago Beach in Lake Couchiching Friday.

"Glad to be here," said Weir, seconds after raising his arms in triumph to not only his crew on the two boats which accompanied him, but to the crowd which lined Kempenfelt Bay's shoreline to greet him.

Asked how he accomplished this marathon feat, Weir had a very simple answer.

"I just tried to keep my stroke together," he said with a smile.

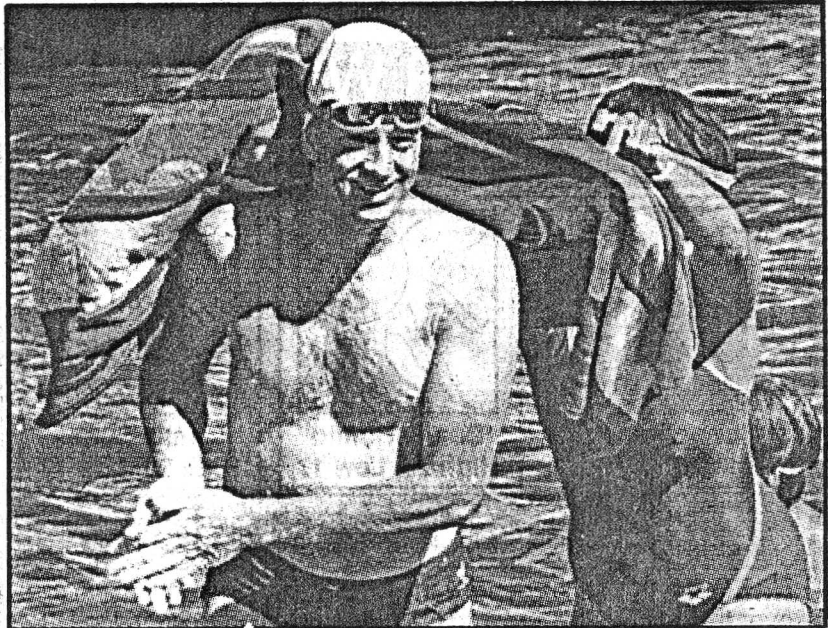
An ambulance also greeted Weir, ready to take him to Royal Victoria Hospital to make sure 25 hours in chilly waters had done him no harm. But he wasn't too interested in the ride.

"I don't think I need it," said Weir, who spent a good five minutes congratulating his crew before finally taking a seat on the ambulance's stretcher.

He was covered in insulation blankets and loaded onto the ambulance, which drove right down to the water to meet him.

Aside from a slight case of the shakes, Weir seemed fine. Charlie Lane, a member of his crew, said there were a few dicey times during the swim but that generally it went well.

"After that amount of time in the water, there were discouraging times," said Lane. "He was blown off course and was naturally bothered by being tired and cold. Six or seven o'clock this morning was pre-



Marilyn KORZEKWA and Bob WEIR

EXAMINER PHOTO

Bob Weir raises his arms in triumph, then wades ashore after swimming from Washago to Barrie, a distance of 35 miles, in 25 hours. Weir reached Centennial Beach at about 4:00 p.m. Saturday. His swim raised approximately \$2,000 for Big Brothers and the Royal Victoria Hospital.

ty bad.

"But that's natural. He's had a few swims and he knows how it feels. He's not a new boy."

Indeed Weir has swam Lake Winnipeg, Lake Manitoba and, two years ago, Lake Ontario — just the 23rd person to ever swim that Great Lake. And just more than one week ago Lane said Weir won the United States 800-metre freestyle swim in his age group.

But the Washago-to-Barrie swim had bettered him before. On July 20,

a thunder storm halted his journey after Weir had completed almost 19 miles of the trip.

No such weather was a factor this time, however. Saturday dawned cold and rainy, but gave way to sunny skies and warm temperatures by midday.

Weir is a member of the Etobicoke Olympium Masters Aquatic Club, and members greeted him as he reached Centennial Beach.

His swim raised about \$2,000 for Big Brothers and RVH in Barrie.