



Cape Jourimain (NB) to Borden (PEI) to Cape Jourimain (NB)

- **Jeremy Davidson (32)** 16:15, two-way, Non-Wetsuit

Support

- *Medic/Safety kayaker:* Joshua Leskie
- *No other on-water support*

Times

- Start Time: 06:40 hrs
- NB to PEI: 8:04
- PEI to NB: 8:11

Weather

- Rough water, heavy swells, and white caps
- Air Temperature ~19°C

Details

Having spent the night in a very comfortable and homey Bed & Breakfast the night before, I was up and in the water by 06:40. Bev Grasse from the [Neil Squire Society](#) (NSS) was at the beach bright and early to see myself and my safety kayaker Joshua off. I felt that that was a very special touch by the wonder folks at NSS, and it really meant a lot to have someone there to get us off to a resounding cheer of ‘Good Luck’ and ‘Have a Great Swim !’

The first hour proved to be the proverbial ‘Quiet Before the Storm’ because shortly thereafter, out of seemingly nowhere, the sky became full of thunder. I thought to myself that the Strait knew what I was up to and decided to get in on the action? Heavy swells (for a swimmer), wind in my face, and swallowing mouthfuls of water let me know under no uncertain terms exactly what kind of an ordeal I was in for! Battling the white caps and cold water with no wetsuit was no fun. Meanwhile, the kayak kept taking on that Josh was unable to bail out because each attempt he made at getting the skirt off, he got swamped by another wave. He was bouncing around pretty good out there to be sure. At times, the waves were such that I was swimming through the waves rather than swimming up and over them. The strangest experience was swimming up and over a wave only to find another wave right behind it and swimming up and over it too instead of down through to the trough. At sea (I spent 12+ years in the Navy before transferring to the Army) we used to call this ‘Stepping Up’. Out here swimming across the Northumberland Strait, I just call it a ‘Fast Track to sea Sickness’. At other times, I was being tossed around so much I felt like I was in our old ‘Front Load’ washer down in the basement. The worst part of course was realizing that I had just started what would turn out to be a 16+ hour’s swim in some of the roughest waters I have to cut through the waves at times and was tossed around.

What would have taken approximately 5 hours under ideal sea and wind conditions took more than 8 hours and at times swimming in the same spot for what seemed like several hours without gaining any



The Start with Bev Grasse (NSS)

distance over ground at all. Often, the water seemed to be coming from every direction all at once; an effect referred to as a state of confused seas.

Reaching close to the mid-way area of the first lap, I saw something under the water. Having had no signs of wildlife thus far, suddenly a bus size shadow of grey, white and black came from the depth below and passed underneath me. A Humpback whale! I learned this after arriving home and looking at some photos. I further read that they were known to frequent the area. However, at the time I was shocked and spent at least the next 20 minutes in a state of high anxiety indeed. I was finally able to get refocused and in that there was nothing that I could do about it anyway, I carried on to the shore; now somewhat farther than I remembered it being just a few short moments before !



The turn at Borden with Sherise Davidson

Reaching the shore to the arms of my wife and children, the Leskie family, the folks from the Neil Squire Society and other supporters, I asked for a sandwich as I was already starting to feel tired and hungry. Before I had the chance to say 'Thanks!', I jumped back into the water because I was freezing (from being out of the water) and chills and shakes started to come on.

Heading back to the opposite shore, I was pulled under the bridge almost immediately due to the unpredictable tide. At this point I thought to myself that this is going to take a lot of work. There were times during the return lap that I felt helpless from being thrashed around like a cork at the bottom of Niagara Falls. It didn't matter how or in which direction I swam, I just tumbled around in the waves and the swell like a tennis ball in a washing machine.

Finally, after what seemed an eternity of never ending bobbing, spinning and tumbling up down and sideways in the dark, we reached the opposite shore in 16 hours and 15 minutes. Josh hit the shore first and collapsed, and then I stood up on my feet and fell back over into the water. My wonderful wife, Sherise, came over to



greet me with tears in her eyes and excitement in her voice half laughing and half crying and said those three magic words: "You did it !"

Everyone on the pitch dark beach, lit only by a fire the made to help guide us in, was cheering and laughing and holding Josh and myself up as we made our way over to the fire and some sorely missed heat and rest. To celebrate, instead of Champagne we all enjoyed a Big Black Forest cake, which my darling wife had somehow (while keeping two pre-school boys busy all day) had put aside earlier. What an adventure!

Only Josh and I will know what happened out there. The emotional ups and downs were sometimes almost overwhelming, and the thought of giving up was never too far away. Still, it was an incredible feeling finally planting my feet on solid ground even though I'm still rocking and rolling as I sit here at my computer two days later writing this !



I think that next time I just might wear a wetsuit !

Jeremy's postscript comments:

The Safety Boat fell through because the lobster season was so good, so it was just me and Josh, but I had some folks come out and check on us, I wasn't going to cancel the swim after all that hard work.

We had radio communications and a tracker but, because of the rough weather from the start, the seals on the tracker were weak and water shorted the system (as I was told afterwards). I really wanted that info so I could say that I swam way more than 30 km !

I tried to find the Temp on the water, in the morning. It was very low 17'. Air was 19' most of the morning until the afternoon but didn't warm up that day. Staying in the water was the warmest spot for me that day.

Jeremy Davidson

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