

The Shark is in the water

Long-distance swimmer Jim Dreyer, who calls himself “The Shark,” jumped into Lake St Clair near the Michigan-Canada border to begin what he hopes will be a 35-kilometre success story – all while hauling a ton of bricks. And he’s swimming solo without a support boat.

A 35km swim across Lake St Clair is like a dip in the water for a guy who has direct crossings of all five Great Lakes under his swim belt. That is why Dreyer is carrying two dinghies filled with 334 bricks. At a weight of 2.75 kilograms per brick, the motivational speaker from Byron Centre, Michigan, is towing more than 900 kilograms behind him. Dreyer calls it his “train of pain.”



After his crew of three loaded up the dinghies with bricks, food, drink and other essentials for the trip, Dreyer waded out into the waters off of the Clinton River Boat Club in Clay Township near Algonac. He donned his wetsuit, took a group photo and the crew affixed the dinghies to Dreyer’s ankles. He then looked in the distance, gazing at the Renaissance Centre towers that comprise General Motors’ headquarters. “Towards Detroit,” he said, before hitting the water to the delight of the onlookers who had gathered to see him get started.

The soon-to-be-50-year-old hopes to come ashore 30 hours later at Detroit’s Belle Isle to greet fans, well-wishers and representatives of Habitat for Humanity, the charity that will benefit from Dreyer’s latest swim.

Dreyer has been preparing since October, doing strength training, completing 32km swims and at one point towing a 2700kg boat in the water. Water temperatures are expected to remain in the 20-21 degree Celsius range, which pleased Dreyer, and he’s hoping the weather remains calm. “If anyone on this planet can do this, it’s me,” Dreyer said with a smile. He’s been in tough situations before, overcoming high waves during his 96km crossing of Lake Superior and falling ill, vomiting repeatedly and dropping 9kg while swimming across Lake Huron.

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