

A Marathon Is Tough, But Try Rowing Non-Stop Across The Pacific Ocean

The Great Pacific Race is one of the toughest human endurance challenges on the planet. This summer, 34 brave souls set out on a non-stop, 2,400-mile journey across the world's largest ocean. From California to Hawaii, in rowboats! No sails or motors were used, just the muscle of the crew pulling on the oars. One of these adventurers was 25 year old **Susannah Cass, a PhD student of science at Trinity College Dublin.** We asked her about her motivation and preparation for such a physically demanding feat, ahead of next weekend's 2014 Dublin Marathon.

What Made You Take On Such An Arduous and Dangerous Challenge?

"I guess I'm just an obsessive rower." While at college in Cambridge, Susannah was the first female Captain of Boats, exactly a century since Everest pioneer George Mallory had held that role. "Mallory is something of a hero of mine, his taste for adventure was a big influence on me". After Cambridge, she rowed for Trinity College Dublin, while

completing her masters degree in Biodiversity and Conservation, and is now researching for her PhD. "I've been lucky enough to experience all sorts of rowing traditions, and represented Ireland at the Home Countries International Regatta. The Great Pacific Race seemed like the next step, it's the ultimate rower's challenge."

What did a typical day at sea consist of?

"I rowed for team Pacific

Warriors, the only girl in a four man crew. Our 30 ft. rowboat consisted of two tiny "cabins", one positioned at each end with a rowing deck in between. Two of us would rest, sleep or eat in these, while two of us would row. Constant rowing in three-hour shifts, 24 hours a day, non-stop for 58 days. Almost two months in all, never sleeping for more than two hours at a time."

What were the main challenges and concerns, before or during the race?

"Such a wide variety; hypothermic cold, sweltering tropical heat, not one, but two hurricanes, blisters in unmentionable places, little in the way of privacy or personal space. Even sharks were a concern, if I went for a dip." Susannah continued, "each crew was solely



Susanna Cass: "Oxylent covered both my nutritional and hydration requirements as it contains a complete range of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, antioxidants and electrolytes."

broke, we couldn't replace it out there. We had to play MacGyver with the duct tape on more than one occasion. Our water maker's solar power supply failed and we had to spend hours

mentally prepared as I would ever be, with strong technical skills, from years of competitive rowing. Once we cast off the main challenge was maintaining good health and energy levels. If one of us got sick or injured, our race would effectively be over (two row, two rest, repeat). Nobody wanted to be in that position, we each had invested our life savings and spent years planning and preparing for this.

While on the water, what steps did you take to avoid fatigue, illness and injury?

"Calories, nutrients and hydration," (Susannah raises a finger for each as she calls them out). She then elaborates, "constant rowing burns a lot of calories, so we had to consume as many calories as possible from food that was also lightweight and easy to cook. Freeze-dried meals ticked all the boxes—except the taste box. Between meals we snacked on high-calorie energy bars and nuts, to further maintain energy levels."

"Nutritional support from food supplements provided us with the essential immune system support required to avoid illness and resulting fatigue. Essential when you're living on a diet of freeze-dried meals, rowing continuously and never sleeping more than two hours at a time; for two months."

"Staying hydrated was a major challenge in the tropical heat. Excessive perspiration meant a loss of fluids and electrolytes. As any athlete knows, loss of

electrolytes quickly leads to devastating muscle cramp, as well as headaches and fatigue."

"I used a food supplement called Oxylent. It covered both my nutritional and hydration requirements as it contains a complete range of vitamins, minerals, amino acids, antioxidants and electrolytes. It's also free of athletic banned substances, gluten, dairy, caffeine, sugar or anything artificial. In the US, everyone involved in endurance sports uses Oxylent; I'm delighted it's now available in Ireland. If you are running the marathon this weekend, I highly recommend you use it, one sachet before, during and after."

Have you any other advice for those running the marathon this weekend?

"Trust that you've prepared well for it. Physically, take electrolytes and stay hydrated. Mentally, have your inspiration ready to get you through the tough times, mental strength is as important in endurance challenges as the physical. If you need inspiration, please visit the webpage below; you need look no further than another hero of mine, Mark Pollock.

justgiving.com/SusannahPacificRow/

For more information, please visit: ambermedltd.com/brand/oxylent

pacificoceanrow.com



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reliant on the food and equipment we brought on board when we cast off, with only a solar powered fresh water maker to survive, as per race rules. If we lost anything overboard or if something

each day, manually pumping sea water through it to provide our fresh drinking water". "Then there was the enormous physical challenge of the race. I was as physically and

