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At a Glance:

WHAT: University of Okoboji Point to Point Swim

WHERE: Gull Point State Park, 1500 Harpen St., off of Hwy 86, Wahpeton

WHEN: 7 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 2

COST: \$25

CONTACT: (712) 338-2424

ONLINE: www.universityofokoboji.com

Schedule:

6-6:45 a.m. - Registration

6:45 a.m. - Group photo

7 a.m. - Start, Gull Point State Park

9-11 a.m. - Finish, south side of Pikes Point

Official Rules:

■ Unless otherwise stated, current United States Masters Swimming long distance swimming rules will govern this race.

■ Each swimmer must be escorted by a non-motorized boat (canoe, kayak, row boat) and should arrange their own escort boat. Two paddlers are required for each canoe.

■ The canoes should include two paddles and three life jackets. Row boats and kayaks will include two life jackets.

■ Each swimmer must be at least 13 years old by the day of the swim.

Helpful Hints:

■ Swimmers should be in good shape. A medical exam prior to the event is advised.

■ At the start of the race, the escort boats should be positioned on the beach with the swimmer. Just prior to the start, the escort boat will be instructed to cast off and position themselves 30-50 yards off shore. At the gun, the swimmer will run into the water, the boat paddlers should watch the swimmer and paddle along side them.

■ Boats for faster swimmers should position themselves further from the shore. Paddlers and swimmers should take an opportunity to practice if possible.

LINDSAY HOEPPNER | STAFF WRITER



Morgan Walz, 12, Lindsay Erickson, 12, and Brooklynn Erickson, 8, all of Spirit Lake, swim at the beach at Gull Point State Park. On August 2 swimmers will cross Lake Okoboji starting at Gull Point State Park and finish on the south side of Pikes Point.

JOSH HARRELL

Swimmers take to waters for U of O event

From Gull Point to Pikes Point, course covers 3.5 miles

Beat the heat by taking a plunge. Into the nice, cool waters of West Lake Okoboji, that is.

Swimmers will be able to unite at the 13th annual University of Okoboji Point to Point Swim Saturday, Aug. 4.

The 3.5 mile trek will take seasoned swimmers from Gull Point State Park to Pikes Point. Anyone who wants to participate must be ready at 7 a.m., weather permitting.

Although the swim will be fun for participants, organizers are taking precautions. All swimmers must be escorted by a non-motorized boat such as a kayak or row boat with at least one person in the boat, and swimmers must be at least 13 years

old by the day of the swim.

Participants will be timed, and must notify the timer at the finish line that they finished, or that they withdrew.

If the weather is not cooperating, the race will be started the same time on Sunday, or be moved back a couple hours, not past 10 a.m.

Although training for the event isn't necessary, organizer Jennifer Will, a past participant, says it could be helpful.

"I would train just a little. I don't know how much people want to train. I didn't, I just went," Will said. "I haven't done it for the last three years though because I've been planning it, so I don't know what it would be like if I participated again."

Note:

■ All swimmers and escort boats must pass between two specifically marked buoys approximately a half mile from the starting line as a safety check where officials will verify that every swimmer is with an escort boat.

■ Only goggles, caps and a swim suit are allowed, no wet suits, non porous attire, fins, pull buoys, leg floats or webbed gloves are allowed.

■ Except at the start, escort boats must stay within 50 feet from their swimmer. The swimmer cannot hang on the boat or receive first aid from their escort without being disqualified.

■ All swimmers must report to the timer at the finish line to report that they finished or that they withdrew.

After the swim, participants will be provided with a T-shirt and organizers of the event will be on hand with goodies such as bagels, bananas, juice and water.

"They're pretty hungry when they get out of the swim," Will said.

The Point to Point Swim is currently sitting at 18 participants, although more will likely sign up the day of the event, Will said. Last year, there were 30 participants.

"I wish them all good luck," Will said. ♦