To those interested in the Monterey Bay Crossing 2014: The 2014 Monterey Bay Crossing is scheduled for Saturday, September 27th. This message contains important notes and comments. Most of the known potential competitors are BCC'd on this message. Please distribute this information among those scullers who might be interested.  
IMPORTANT NOTES  
 \* Race Director is TBD and will likely be a member of Santa Cruz Rowing Club \* race is open to rowed and sculled craft: singles, doubles, triples and quads designed and seaworthy for rough water rowing \* race could be cancelled at the last minute if weather or sea conditions will not allow for expected safe operation of rowing shells and escort boats (however, September is usually pretty nice here) \* Santa Cruz Rowing Club is the sponsor of this event and contestants must sign liability waivers and coordinate with SCRC and Race Director. \* rower costs and deadline for registration are TBD (it's usually not expensive) \* rowers should be experienced in navigating and trained to a fitness level allowing for several hours straight of rowing with few rest breaks \* rowers should be confident of their ability to re-enter their shell from deep water. Perhaps more than once, even  
COURSE  
 The course is a straight line (if you're good) from the entrance of Santa Cruz Harbor to the entrance of the Marina in Monterey. Officially, the time is kept from the Aldo's Restaurant wharf inside Santa Cruz harbor to an imaginary line between Coast Guard Pier (Jetty) and Municipal Wharf #2 in Monterey. Timekeeping may or may not be done by Santa Cruz rowing club volunteers, this year's timekeeping is TBD. The distance is approximately 25.5 statute miles as the crow flies but usually significantly longer for most rowers with an imperfect course. Generally, this may take between 3 hours for a very fast double in good conditions and 5 hours for a slow single (or even 6 or 7 hours for weak rowers in the case of rough weather or in the case of heavy traditional or slow boats). After crossing the imaginary line and finishing the timed event, rowers must go back outside the Municipal Wharf #2 and follow the wharf in to the beach to land. This spot on the beach near Municipal Wharf #2 is the quietest surf and nicest beach location for landing. Look for "Municipal Beach" on a map online, for example. The surf conditions will depend on swell, chop, tide and a few other factors and might be difficult but often are mild especially in September. Warning: after rowing several hours it may be difficult to stand even without surf breaking against you and a boat on your shoulder. For most contestants, a GPS will be an important asset for navigation. One is not required and a compass may be adequate for the experienced skipper. [Compass is required as backup in any case. And PFDs, of course.]  
TIME  
 Contestants are free to start at a time of their choosing, within limits. The limits are a few important ones. First, contestants should plan to complete the course before about 10:30 or maybe 11:00 at the latest for logistical reasons (celebration and boat return) and because it is likely the wind will be strong by then. This means that some crews will wish to start in the dark and most will wish to start before sunrise. [Sunrise is at 7:00. The autumnal equinox is September 22 but the day of 12 hour sun is September 26.] Rowing in the dark brings several challenges. Any crews who wish to start in the dark should contact Linda Locklin, Tim Huebner or Tom Dexel all of whom can give lots of advice on this topic. One requirement is for Coast Guard boat lights (red, green, white) during the hours of darkness. Second, the start time should be compatible with the rower's escort skipper, crew and boat. [Some skippers may not enjoy a super early wake-up. Some skippers may have the need to return to Santa Cruz before a deadline (not the least of which is the rising wind and deteriorating sea conditions), necessitating an early start.] Third, if you start or finish before or after our timekeepers are present you won't have an official time.  
LOGISTICS  
 If all goes according to plan, Santa Cruz Rowing Club's trailer will be parked at the finish and available to transport all or nearly all contestant's shells back to Santa Cruz Harbor if they are of typical sizes. A few volunteers will be on hand to help rowers disembark (i.e., stumble out of) their shells and carry them up for temporary storage on the beach. Some will be de-rigged but many or most will fit the trailer with riggers on. Beach captain and/or crew of volunteers will assist.  
CEREMONY  
 Weather permitting, there will be gathering with food and drink and story telling. If all goes according to plan, times will be announced and awards given. Then more stories will be told. Escorts are invited, welcomed, honored and thanked. This gathering takes place on Municipal Beach. Bring a jacket.  
ESCORTS  
 The most challenging part of this event is the need for an escort for each rowing shell. Although it is tempting to "share" an escort, it is a mistake to plan for such sharing for several important reasons. Planned sharing almost never works out to the plan. Escorts and racers should meet the evening before and discuss all race strategies and escort duty expectations and limits. Not all escorts want to escort the same way, for example. Some escorts will happily bring backup clothing, hydration, first aid, etc. for the racers. Some escorts may be unable to transport the shell they are escorting in the case of broken equipment. But any of them will, at a minimum, be able to transport the rower(s) in the case of a failure of rower or equipment. If you know of any skipper who might be willing to escort a sculler for this event please contact us. Santa Cruz Rowing Club will try to obtain escorts for all the contestants. Our club can't guarantee that enough escorts will be found. So we urge all contestants to make their own efforts in addition to SCRC's efforts and coordinate this with the Race Director. Often it is best to stay in touch with one's escort by employing a VHF radio. Shouting also might work. Hand waving isn't the best. Escorts are allowed to assist the rowers [i.e., supplying clothing, water, cheering, use of the escort's head, course guidance, food, first aid, conversation, tools, repairs, etc.] they escort but towing them or transporting their boat will not qualify the rowers for awards. Not every escort will take part in the gathering after the race.  
SEA CONDITIONS  
 The sea conditions in Monterey Bay can be anything from flat as a lake to essentially the same as offshore in the Pacific Ocean. Generally one can expect a swell coming from a NW or WNW direction. In addition there will likely be a wind which will change directions throughout the morning (often starting from N and shifting to E then S, a headwind, then W then NW by noon or earlier). Our expectation is for wind to be light early in the morning and build to a peak by mid-day. A typical day will find many whitecaps during peak wind. The swells can be 3 to 20 feet high. But their interval can also vary a great deal so a 20 foot swell with a long interval may not be steep and may even be pleasant. The sea conditions usually make course keeping a very challenging task. Nearly every wave will turn the rowers' boats away from a perfect course. In addition to the water, the weather may pose challenges. Fog is somewhat common (though late September sees little fog, typically). Thick fog might reduce visibility so that rowers cannot see hazards and escort boats cannot see their rowers. Rain might occur, soaking the rowers and causing evaporative cooling.  
HAZARDS  
 Monterey Bay has fishing boats (big and small, commercial and private), sailboats, tour boats, SUPs, kayaks, outrigger canoes and many other skippered craft. Skippers of these craft sometimes will not be courteous to rowers. Monterey Bay has whales, sea lions, dolphins, sharks, otters, harbor seals, orca (rarely) and birds (did i mention sea lions?) which, in case of a collision, can cause a capsize and/or equipment failure. In particular, there is normally a dense population of sea lions (some of which weigh 1200 lbs.) who swim near the Coast Guard Jetty at the finish. There are only three buoys near the race course that might pose a danger of collision. But rowers have been known to stray off the course. Jellyfish live in Monterey Bay in abundance. Giant Kelp grows near shore and floats and drifts in deep water when dislodged.  Logs and debris are generally not abundant but can cause serious damage in a collision. Near the finish, when rowers are the most tired, one can expect a lot of boats under way and anchored.  And a lot of Sea Lions.  Water temperature on the surface will probably be somewhere between 50 and 54 degrees Fahrenheit. If one capsizes and swims, that's chilly but shouldn't cause hypothermia very quickly. Air temperature will probably be something close to that.  
NAVIGATION  
 Course keeping is easiest if the rowing shell's skipper employs a GPS and has accurately programmed waypoints, not simply the single finish line as the only waypoint. Lacking a GPS, a compass and some experience and guidance may be adequate, especially if the weather is clear and visibility is good. Warning: the finish is NOT at the end of the Monterey Peninsula and heading for that might help a bit at first but will not even get you close to the finish. Navigation assistance from the escort skipper should be discussed in detail before the race between the rower and the escort.