

MARSH HARBOUR, Abaco -- Crowds of excited swimming fans gathered on the shore at Crossing Rocks on Saturday, October 2nd, for the popular Abaco open-water 5K swim.

Hosted by the Abaco Swim Club and supported by the Ministry of Tourism, competitors of all shapes and sizes, aged 5 to 80 plus, came from around the archipelago of islands to enjoy a near-perfect weather day. Participants from Abaco, Freeport and Nassau competed in the race in both relays and individual categories. There was also a mini swim race later in the afternoon for the younger swimmers.

Light breezes, calm seas, and a gorgeous sunny sky had some remarking they could "swim forever." The 5K (or 3.7 mile) course consisted of three laps around a patrolled and marked course.

In the individual category, Dereck Gibbs of the Blue Marlin Aquatics club in Freeport was the overall winner. He finished the race in a time of 1:08:20. Dereck had never swum a 5k before and was a little unsure of what he was getting into. He said he enjoyed the race however and he looks forward to doing it again next year.

Dereck battled the whole way with veteran swimmer and coach Andy Knowles of Swift Swimming Nassau. Andy was the second individual swimmer over the finish line.

The first female to finish in the individual category was 10 year old Christina Pyfrom of Abaco. Brave young Christina swam an amazing race and didn't let the sighting of stingrays and sharks stop her!

The relay category of the race had a team from Freeport entered. Dereck Gibbs and Nicholas Von Albedehyll of the Blue Marlin Aquatics teamed up with Andrew Smith of the Freeport Aquatics Club. They were successful in bringing home the gold in their category.

The 5K race is a charity event that the Abaco Swim Club hosts every year. This year the Ministry of Tourism partnered with the swim club to make it an exceptional experience. The community of Abaco came out to cheer on their own and to support a worthy cause. Thanks also goes to Rotary, who provided assistance with the refreshments, and to the many donors of food and help from the Abaco community.