

600-meter Agility Swim at Eel Lake

By Bob Bruce

I've always been fascinated by obstacle courses. Perhaps some of this predilection is hereditary; my dad, who served on the Physical Education faculty of the United States Military Academy at West Point, often administered the testing on their famous indoor obstacle course. I loved the obstacle course that I built and directed one summer at scout camp. And I've been riveted by televised sheepdog trials, and marvel at the ability of the little beasts to change direction at furious pace.

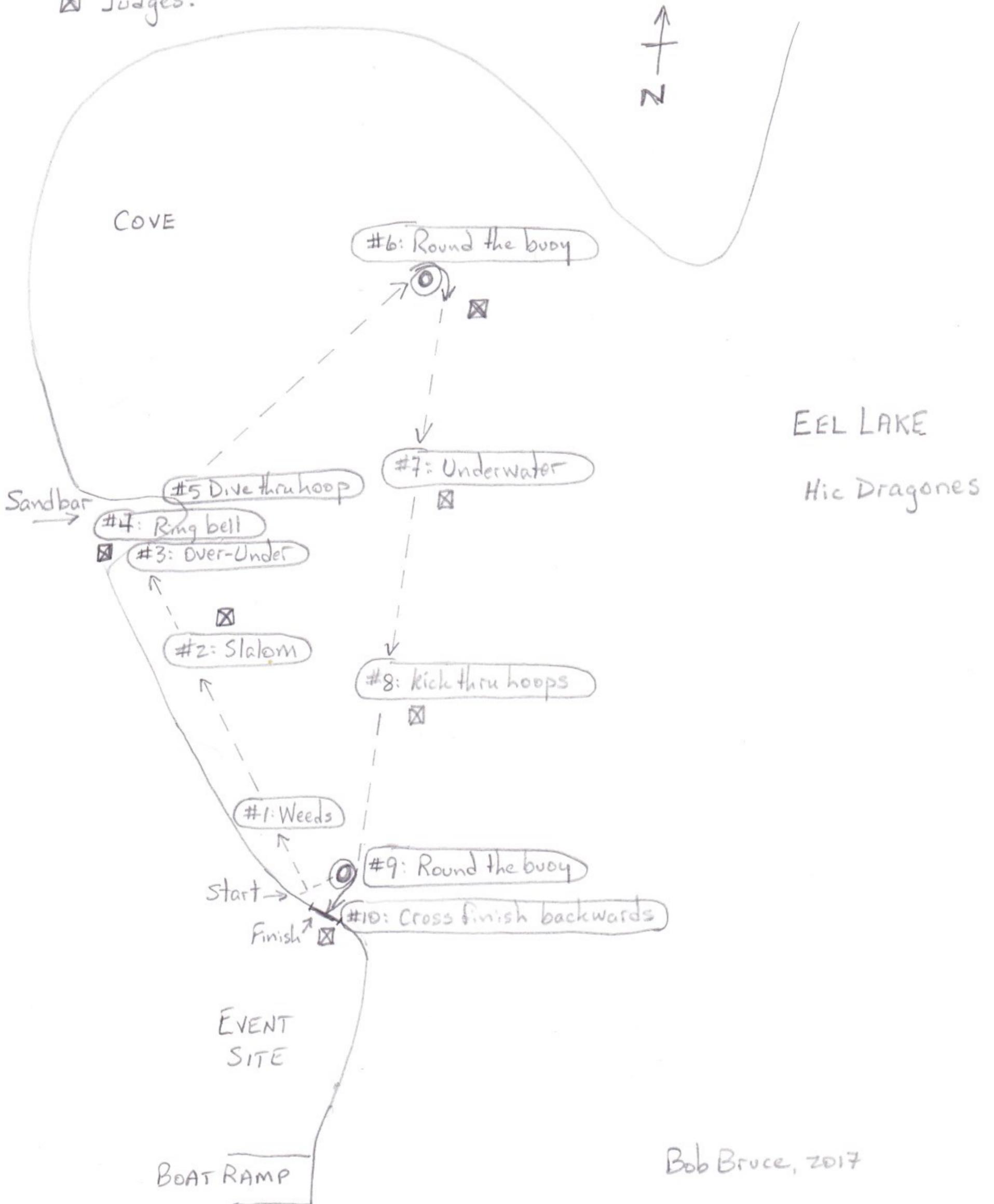
Given this fascination, and knowing that swimmers are the least agile athletes on our planet, I have decided to amuse myself (at the expense of my swimming pals) by building an obstacle course for swimmers, a 600-meter agility swimming course in the cove at Eel Lake. The event will be an individual time trial, run fastest to slowest by 500-yard seed time, with 20-second starting intervals. The course will test both athletic and cognitive agility (uh, oh), and includes the following stations:

- Station 1: Weeds. Soon after the start, the swimmer passes over several meters of aquatic weeds near the left shoreline. These weeds are harmless, but lie only a few centimeters under the water surface. Some say "Ick!" I say "Go for it!"
- Station 2: Slalom. The swimmer negotiates an eight-buoy slalom course. Buoys are set about five meters apart, and staggered so that each turn requires a 90-degree (or more) change of direction.
- Station 3: Over-under. Approaching the sandbar, the swimmer scrambles over a stationary obstacle about 30 inches high then under another one about 18 inches high.
- Station 4: Bell ringing. The swimmer runs on sand to the bell, rings the bell three times, and sprints back to the water.
- Station 5: Dive through hoop. To re-enter the water, the swimmer performs a shallow dive through a large hoop. Flames are optional.
- Station 6: Round the buoy. Around the first large buoy, the swimmer performs a full 360-degree clockwise turn plus enough of an additional turn to head to the next station.
- Station 7: Swim underwater. The swimmer swims under six water noodles, placed about four feet apart. The swimmer may surface whenever necessary, but must pass beneath all six noodles.
- Station 8: Kick through hoops. The swimmer kicks through six small hoops, placed about four feet apart, using kicking only—NO HANDS at all during this station.
- Station #9: Round the buoy. Around the second large buoy, the swimmer performs another full 360-degree clockwise turn plus enough of an additional turn to head to the last station.
- Station 10: Cross the finish backwards. When the swimmer stands to cross the finish line, he or she must turn and step backwards through the finish line.

How's your swimming agility?

EEL LAKE AGILITY SWIM MAP

☒ Judges!



Bob Bruce, 2017