



86.5 nautical miles to the North Pole!

Date: April 18, 2009

Location: N88°33.777' W065 03.242'

Time Traveled: 13 hours

Distance Traveled: 13.3 nautical miles

AM Temperature: -8° F

PM Temperature: -6° F

AM: cloudy, poor contrast, clouds clearing throughout day

PM: some sun

86.5 nautical miles to the pole

*John and Tyler are committed to raising funds and awareness for [CaringBridge](#) .*

By: Tyler Fish

{play}images/stories/41809fishWIR.mp3{/play}

Audio Transcript:

"Well, it's been an eventful week for me and John full of things that we would consider good and we consider bad. Now when I say good, I think of things that move us forward quickly, make us feel really confident, and when I say bad, I don't mean bad in that necessarily dangerous or tragic or disappointing way necessarily, but more that this is an opportunity for us to learn something to help us get to the pole faster.

So, you may remember the last week ended with us somewhere in the 87's trying to reach 88. Well, it was within this week we reached 88° of latitude and celebrated that. We also switched to a 13-hour day, a 13-hour workday, which means we're working more, sleeping slightly less, but once we got in the routine, we felt really good. The week began with a little bit of Easter celebration, family-day phone calls; those are great. When Day 43 came, and we approached a lead and we decided for the first time that we wanted to swim. We put on our dry suits, which are very protective, to get across this small stretch of open water. And we realized at the end that our systems were not quite ready for our swim and we made a very safe call, a good thing, not to swim. Of course the bad thing, was that it cost us a little bit of time and we ended up camping on what ended up being the wrong side of the lead because it opened up more in the night and became about a quarter of mile wide.

Of course that led to the good thing the next day by moving up along our lead until we found a crossing with a very easily swum location. So we did swim and we felt very wonderful about that and we tested it like, just what is it like? We had these dry suits on and it was very safe to do. Then we had a few days of testing out some leads, taking a little bit of photos and video, which we hadn't done much of at all because photos and video are really hard when it's cold, I'll be honest.

Day 46 came and it was a great 13-hour day. We felt very steady and John wrote the blog 'How Hard Is It?,' which was an appropriate question because people have that question, 'how hard is it skiing unsupported to the North Pole?,' so read that one from a couple of days ago if you are interested. Well, how hard is it was a question we got to ask ourselves because Day 47 began with a wonderfully quick start and then a bad thing happened, although not an unusual thing, almost all polar expeditions have it happen, John went through the ice up to his neck and swam for a little bit. I pulled him out, helped him out, and we dried him out, fed him, and he was very safe. Again, these things happen, a bad thing, but mostly it was an opportunity for us to be reminded this is the Arctic Ocean, we need to be humble, and not over-confident. We need to be smart. We know what to do; we just have to do it. The bad thing is it cost us some time and definitely some energy and some miles, but we're feeling positive and we're definitely recovered. But the good conversation has lead us to a great day yesterday, very steady; we feel like we've had a good plan for the rest of the expedition to make it to the pole. We are less than 100 miles to the North Pole, half way to 89 degrees, in the final push.

Another change will be coming this week: John and I will begin rolling the clock, probably not tomorrow, but the next day. That means that we will add hours to our day and essentially live longer days. We will probably live on a 27- or 28-hour day. That means that we will have longer

work days, maybe a little more sleep, and try to cram as many nautical miles into our time as possible in order to make it to this ever elusive North Pole.

I'll leave you with this: John and I have been constantly thinking: what is going to get us to the North Pole? We fantasize about red carpets, moving sidewalks, or little ice slides that will magically get you there faster, well, maybe not in record time, but certainly with a cushion. But in the end I think we both realize that it's hard work, patience, and care for each other. Those are the three things that are going to get us there, and we just have to do them every day. Work hard, be patient, and take care of each other and that will get us to that ever elusive farthest north."

---