



SWIM-MASTER

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UP DATE: MASTERS SWIMMING - LIFETIME VIGOROUS SWIMMING FOR HEALTH, FUN AND SPORT

It must be borne in mind that the primary reason for the existence of Masters Swimming is the promotion of physical fitness and, through the medium of physical fitness, better health for those who participate. The competitive aspects of Masters Swimming, although essential to the program, are held to be secondary in purpose and mainly furnish the motivational spur necessary for continued swimming on a daily basis over the entire adult life span. Competition is the heart of the Masters program, but actual competition exists to serve a higher purpose.

Programs such as Masters Swimming are made necessary by the peculiarities of twentieth century life in the advanced nations. It was only with the coming of extensive industrialization and the movement away from a predominantly agricultural and laboring society towards a preponderantly sedentary white collar society that certain ill effects on human health connected with the lack of physical exertion began to appear. The most prominent disease which seems to be partially enhanced by "hypokinesia" (reduced physical activity) is coronary artery disease with its accompanying myocardial infarctions (heart attacks). Many other aspects of modern life, such as diets rich in calories and fat, tobacco smoking, and elevated blood pressure are also associated with the high incidence of heart disease, but there is good evidence to suggest that a lack of physical exertion plays an important role in the disease's onset and course, at least in certain populations. Some years ago, evidence began to accumulate in the medical literature that those individuals who took regular daily exercise of a reasonable challenging sort, that is, work that made their hearts beat significantly faster than at rest, and which made them breathe much more rapidly than normal, appeared to have a certain amount of protection against heart attacks as compared to individuals who were sedentary. This association between exercise and diminished risk of heart attacks stood up when the other risk factors were held even between the two groups. The association, although important, was not absolute. The protective effect of physical fitness is most strikingly seen in individuals who do have heart

attacks. Heart attacks occurring in people who have some degree of physical fitness due to regular exercise are much less likely to be fatal than those occurring in individuals who are sedentary.

During the 1950s and early 1960s, the incidence of coronary artery disease increased steadily in the United States and Western Europe and reached epidemic proportions. It was at this time that various recommendations which might prevent heart disease, such as a low-cholesterol diet, abstinence from cigarette smoking, and the lowering of blood pressure, were publicized. The time was propitious for the formulation of regular exercise programs. In order to fully benefit from exercise, it must be carried out throughout one's life. It is not possible to exercise heavily as a youth and store away the benefits for the next five or six decades. Many studies about longevity of college athletes versus nonathletes have been unable to come up with any really clear-cut differences between the two groups except that those individuals who participated in nonteam sports and who continued to exercise after college had a more favorable mortality experience than those who did not continue to exercise.

During the 1950s and 1960s, Dr. Ransom J. Arthur had considerable experience in coaching and training people in the navy and continued to compete himself past the age of 40. The navy team had swimmers of various ages, 18 year olds, 25 year olds, 38 year olds, and so forth, and it was clear to Dr. Arthur that, with appropriate training methods, it was possible for adults to compete in meets without undue danger. It was also obvious that the prospect of actual competition in a future meet provided a goal and a framework for continuous daily practice which would otherwise have become boring and tedious. There are only a very few people who can do calisthenics or swim every day, without any kind of external challenge or recognition. It was obvious that the health benefits observed in older navy swimmers could be extended beyond the navy to civilian populations.

During the 1960s, Dr. Arthur contacted various

members of the sports establishment, including the President's Council on Physical Fitness and the National AAU, with the idea of beginning a competitive program in swimming for adults. The idea was received tepidly. While mildly enthusiastic letters were written in response, no one was willing to do anything concrete and specific to inaugurate such a program. However, in 1969 a very fortunate event occurred. John Spanuth, a well-known coach, was elected president of the American Swim Coaches Association. After reading a paper detailing the health benefits which might be expected from an adult competitive swimming program, John offered the facilities of the Amarillo Aquatics Club, Amarillo, Texas, where he was aquatics director, for the purpose of the first national meet which was held in May of 1970.

In the first meet the lower age limit was set at 25. The age 25 was chosen because in the immediately preceding Senior National AAU Swimming Championships there had been no swimmer who was older than 25. Dr. Arthur was anxious from the beginning to avoid any conflict with the AAU and to make sure that the movement did not interfere with the main stream of national and international competitive programs. Divisions were first set at ten-year increments but one of the lessons learned immediately from the meet was that ten years was simply too long an interval. While the truly exceptional swimmer could still win when he was at the older end of a ten-year age group, this was simply too wide a spread for the vast majority of competitors. In subsequent meets five-year age groups were settled on which seems to be the right interval for practicality and utility.

The first meet had a relatively small number of swimmers, many of them local, but some individuals came from distant places. The first meet demonstrated that it was entirely possible to stage a swim competition for men and women over 25, that it could be done safely, that races in all strokes and distances were possible, and that such a meet would be the source of a great deal of challenge and pleasure to the participants. The second national meet was held a year later in Amarillo, and at that time Dr. Arthur and Dr. Richard Rahe undertook medical studies on some of the competitors. They were able to confirm that actual competition was a feasible enterprise for older people and that there were no apparent adverse aftereffects following racing in otherwise healthy individuals. The group of participants was found to be in excellent physical condition, with slow resting pulses, healthily low blood pressure in relationship to age averages, and generally sound cardiovascular systems.

Following the 1971 meet, it was felt that Masters Swimming was at a crossroads. The program would continue to go its own way, but it was handicapped by the lack of national organizational backup. On the other hand, the program could seek admittance to the National AAU and receive the benefits but also the constraints that the AAU could furnish. Meanwhile, John Spanuth had left Amarillo to become national Aquatics director for the AAU and urged seeking AAU status for the Masters Swimming Program. It was at this point in time that John Spanuth asked June Krauser to develop the rules and procedures for submission to the AAU. June served for many years on the AAU Swimming Rules Committee and also was Rules Chairman for all of the Junior Olympic Sports. Following a presentation by Dr. Arthur and Dr. Rahe at the National AAU Convention in October 1971 at Lake Placid, New York, Masters Swimming was adopted as an official AAU activity. Although there were some liabilities to such membership, by and large the association was useful, perhaps even a necessary one for the solid growth of Masters Swimming. The AAU was able to provide a nationwide network of associations and through these associations, furnish a base for recruitment and registration of swimmers, as well as access to swimming pools and appropriate officials.

In November of 1971, the Council for National Cooperation in Aquatics (CNCA) sponsored a closed workshop on Masters Swimming at their meeting at Yale University. A list of questions and answers evolved from that CNCA workshop and was distributed throughout the country to help promote the program.

The official publication - SWIM-MASTER - was initiated in December of 1971. It is a non/profit newsletter for those interested in subscribing. Many swimmers - world-wide - subscribe in order to get a listing of up-coming meets; results of National Championships; Top-Ten Times; articles; meet results; pictures; etc. Six issues a year were published in the beginning but soon increased to nine issues a year. SWIM-MASTER has been published for the past 13 years without interruption. Copies of all issues published can be found in the library of the International Swimming Hall of Fame.

As soon as the program was adopted by the AAU, the number of swimmers immediately multiplied. The first National AAU Masters Swimming Championships was held in San Mateo, CA in May of 1972. It was decided to have two National Championships a year, one 25-yard short course in the spring, and the other a 50-meter long course at the end of the summer. The meets have been characterized by outstanding performances at all age levels. Many individuals, both male and female, achieve

times superior to those they had achieved twenty years before while competing in AAU, high school, or college competitions. At the local level, the spread of ability is often very wide and it is at this level that beginning swimmers can find the most enjoyment. In the national meets, most of the competitors are swimmers of very high caliber.

Many individuals were pioneers of Masters Swimming at the national level and they include Judge Robert E. Beach of St. Petersburg, Florida, the first Masters vice-chairman; Ted Haartz and the late Hal Onusseit who kept our records straight; Ham and Mildred Anderson, the Masters historians; and Enid Uhrich and Ed Reed, Sr. who were instrumental in the recording of the times achieved in all events and the classification of those times into the national "Top Ten Times!"

From the very beginning of the Masters Swimming Program, great emphasis has been placed on allowing ANYONE and EVERYONE to participate. This is still true - 13 years later! Growth is evidenced by increases in our registrations; number of member clubs; number of participants in our National Championships; and more interested delegates attending our annual National Convention. However, with continued growth comes a more structured organization. It is more difficult to regulate a large group. With an increase in interested individuals come more diverse ideas. Dr. Arthur had hoped to have a very loosely run society but even he warned that with the passing of time and with increased growth would have to come more stringent rules and procedures.

These past thirteen years have seen many changes in the structure of the organization. For the first two years we were a sub-committee of AAU Swimming. In 1974 we became a separate Sports Supervising committee of the AAU. In 1977 we decided to investigate incorporation along with inclusion in the new Joint Aquatics Committee. It was about this time that Congress was deciding that the AAU could not be the National Governing body for thirteen different sports and all sports were going to have to form their own National Governing body. By 1979 we became the newly formed Masters Swimming Committee of the AAU, Inc. with a Code of Regulations. 1980 marked the first United States Aquatic Sports Convention and we were no longer connected with the AAU but officially "on our own". USMS, Inc. is unique in that it is almost entirely governed by its participants! And, these participants represent many different occupations giving us many experienced people to help promote the program. Most of them also have had experience

with AAU swimming, high school swimming, College swimming, YMCA swimming, swimming administration, coaching experience - bringing to the Masters Swimming Program a wealth of knowledge in swimming.

We have always encouraged the participation of foreign swimmers. They have attended our National Championships from the beginning. Letting professionals (coaches, etc.) swim in our program has caused concern in some countries and yet other countries have adapted our rules. For the past eight years there has been a section in the FINA rule book on Masters Swimming. FINA limits Masters competition to local, provincial or national involvement. International competition has been limited to amateurs. However, with the election of Bob Helmick as President of FINA, we might be in for a few changes. Bob has competed in Masters Swimming meets and is very familiar with the program. He has established a Masters Swimming Commission to which he named Tina Martin, Chairman. It is hoped that the First World Championships for Masters Swimming will be held in 1986, where amateurs & professionals 25 years and older will compete.

New people join Masters Swimming all the time, and a few drop out. Amongst categories of people who tend to drop out are those who do not really like swimming as such, but were interested in swimming simply as a mode of exercise and those who are intensely competitive and who cannot bear to lose. On the other hand, there are many people who continue to participate year after year and who are obtaining maximum benefits from the program. Continued participation can add a highly beneficial dimension to one's life. Working out three to six times a week with challenging workouts will guarantee a degree of physical fitness as measured by decreased blood pressure, increased respiratory capacity, increased maximum oxygen uptake, and lower resting pulse. Continued participation can also aid one's mental health by draining off large quantities of anxiety, depression, and anger; but any exercise program must necessarily remain secondary in the lives of the vast majority of adults. The important thing is to enjoy swimming, to participate as fully as possible, and let the program add a good measure of happiness and satisfaction to one's life. The actual competition is fine, and achieving one's goals in the way of better times is heartening, but there comes a point when there are inevitable individual declines in performance and it is just at this point that one should stay with the program and not give up. After all, Masters Swimming is an activity that can be enjoyed for all of one's adult life!

NATIONAL MEETINGS

OCT 1971	Lake Placid, New York
NOV 1972	Kansas City, Kansas
OCT 1973	West Yellowstone, Montana
OCT 1974	Washington, D.C.
DEC 1975	New Orleans, Louisiana
OCT 1976	Phoenix, Arizona
OCT 1977	Columbus, Ohio
NOV 1978	San Antonio, Texas
NOV 1979	Las Vegas, Nevada
OCT 1980	Snow Bird, Utah
OCT 1981	Snow Bird, Utah
SEP 1982	Memphis, Tennessee
SEP 1983	Cincinnati, Ohio
SEP 1984	Indianapolis, Indiana

NATIONAL OFFICERS

1972	Ransom Arthur, Pres., Bob Beach, V-P
1973	Ransom Arthur, Pres., Bob Beach, V-P
1974	June Krauser, Pres., David Beardsley, Sec.
1975	June Krauser, Pres., David Beardsley, Sec.
1976	June Krauser, Pres., David Beardsley, Sec.
1977	June Krauser, Pres., Ted Haartz, Sec.
1978	Ted Haartz, Pres., Enid Uhrich, Sec.
1979	Ted Haartz, Pres., Mike Laux, V-P, Enid Uhrich, Sec., Reg Richardson, Treas.
1980	Ted Haartz, Pres., Mike Laux, V-P, Enid Uhrich, Sec., Reg Richardson, Treas.
1981	Ted Haartz, Pres., Mike Laux, V-P, Enid Uhrich, Sec., Reg Richardson, Treas.
1982	Mike Laux, Pres., Verne Scott, V-P, Dot Donnelly, Sec., Reg Richardson, Treas.
1983	Mike Laux, Pres., Verne Scott, V-P, Dot Donnelly, Sec., Reg Richardson, Treas.
1984	Mike Laux, Pres., Verne Scott, V-P, Dot Donnelly, Sec., Reg Richardson, Treas.
1985	Mike Laux, Pres., Verne Scott, V-P, Dot Donnelly, Sec., Reg Richardson, Treas.

PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

There were two national meets held prior to affiliation with the AAU. There have been 26 additional championships making a total of 28 National Masters Swimming Championships held. A 'bit of trivia' - those competing in the most National Championships are:

28 National Meets - Mildred and Ham Anderson

26 National Meets - Ted Haartz
June Krauser
Jim Welch
Art Welch

25 National Meets - Jane Katz & Reg Richardson

SHORT COURSE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

May 2-3, 1970	Amarillo, TX (49)
May 7-8, 1971	Amarillo, TX (112)
May 19-21, 1972	San Mateo, CA (325)
May 18-20, 1973	Santa Monica, CA (500)
May 17-19, 1974	Ft. Lauderdale, FL (561)
May 16-18, 1975	Ft. Lauderdale, FL (663)
May 14-16, 1976	Mission Viejo, CA
May 13-15, 1977	Ft. Lauderdale, FL (611)
May 19-21, 1978	San Antonio, TX
May 4-7, 1979	Mission Viejo, CA
1980	Ft. Lauderdale, FL (875)
1981	Irvine, CA
1982	Woodlands, TX
May 28-31, 1983	Ft. Lauderdale, FL (1208)
May 26-29, 1984	Industry Hills, CA (1227)
May 10-13, 1985	Milwaukee, WI

LONG COURSE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

Aug 11-13, 1972	Bloomington, IN (188)
Aug 10-12, 1973	Chicago, IL (500)
Sep 6-8, 1974	Santa Clara, CA
Aug 29-31, 1975	Knoxville, TN
Aug 27-29, 1976	St. Louis, MO
1977	Spokane, WA
8/31-9/3, 1978	Providence, RI
1979	Dearborne, MI
1980	Santa Clara, CA
1981	Canton, OH
1982	Portland, OR
1983	Indianapolis, IN (908)
Aug 23-26, 1984	Raleigh, NC (840)
Aug 17-20, 1985	Providence, RI

SWIM-MASTER

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