

summer nationals preview



Nacionales – No Passport Needed for This Exotic Locale

by Bill Edwards

Competitors and spectators might feel a tinge of familiarity at this year's U.S. Masters Swimming Summer Nationals in Puerto Rico ... that is, if they happen to attend another major USMS event earlier this year. The \$28 million Olympic Natatorium of San Juan was modeled after the Georgia Tech Aquatic Center, site of the 1996 Olympic Games

and the 2010 Short Course National Championships.

The biggest differences are that the San Juan aquatics center is a decade newer, and that the tropical-paradise setting for the long-course event is many decades older. Founded in 1512, San Juan is the oldest European-founded city within the boundaries of the United States – older than Jamestown, Va., (1607) and St. Augustine, Fla., (1565). The Dominican city of Santo Domingo, christened in 1496 by Christopher Columbus's brother Bartholomew, is the only European city in the New World that came earlier.

Puerto Rican sports enthusiasts prefer to focus on the young-

er aspects of their centrally located athletic venue, however.

Opened in 2006, the natatorium's 50-meter Olympic pool is considered a world-class facility. Ten lanes wide, the pool has a movable bulkhead to split the distance for shorter events, and the pool floor is adjustable to vary the depth to accommodate handicapped swimmers. For Summer Nationals, officials will set the depth at a uniform 10 feet and maintain a water temperature of 79° F.

The entire facility is under roof to protect swimmers and observers from the harmful effects of the sun, but open on the sides to allow cooling tropical breezes to flow through for the

benefit of everyone. Also under roof are a 25-meter, nine-lane diving tank that will serve as the event's warm-up pool; 2,000 spectator seats; four concessionaires; a gymnasium; and a complement of bathrooms, showers and locker rooms. For the benefit of swim officials, the facility features a master control suite with Daktronics scoring and a top-of-the-line underwater sound system.

The natatorium is located on the east side of San Juan's Central Park, which is exactly the location envisioned by San Juan Mayor Jorge Santini, who was elected partly because of his campaign promise to build an Olympic-level aquatics center. To spearhead this effort,



Santini hired Maria Elena Batista as sports and recreation director for the city.

A competitive swimmer who represented Puerto Rico in several Central American and Caribbean Games, the Pan American Games and the 1988 Olympics, Batista has attracted 10 stateside U.S. colleges, including the United States Military Academy, to use the facility for summer training. Batista also created a program to rescue inner-city kids who were diving off bridges into polluted water, offering them access to the natatorium's new diving facilities, and revitalized the city's Hiram Bithorn Stadium to attract soccer and major league baseball events.

Mayor Santini emphasizes the natatorium's central location to promote events and attractions for visitors who want something extra when they come to compete or watch their favorite swimmers in the pool lanes. Here's what to look for:

••• **BEACHES.** With 272 miles of beaches, Puerto Rico is a haven for open water enthusiasts, including long-distance swimmers, boaters and surfers. Two of the best beaches for swimming, according to the website for Frommer's travel guides, are near the site of the 2010 Summer Nationals Open Water Swim on August 13. Go to usms.org/comp/lcnats/. The best places to watch surfers around San Juan are Puntas, Domes, Tres Palmas, and Steps. For the center of all surfing activity, go to Rincón beach. For complete beach information, go to frommers.com/destinations/puertorico/0094020110.html. For kayaking and snorkeling, check out kayakingpuertorico.com.

••• **PUERTO RICO, THE ISLAND.** Puerto Rico was under Spanish rule throughout most of its modern history, having been claimed as a Spanish colony by Columbus in 1493. After the Spanish-American War in 1898, Puerto Rico became a

United States possession. Puerto Ricans became U.S. citizens in 1917, and the island became a Commonwealth of the United States in 1952. Various movements and counter-movements on the issue of statehood have been around ever since.

••• **EVERYONE MUST EAT.** As one might expect from any cosmopolitan city, San Juan offers nearly every type of cuisine, but traditional local cuisine includes a mix of Spanish, Creole, and native Indian influences. Some of the Island's best restaurants also may be found outside San Juan, such as the Mesones Gastronómico (gastronomic inns), a series of restaurants scattered across the island featuring excellent local cuisine at reasonable prices. For restaurant information, go to meetpuertorico.com.

••• **HISTORIC SAN JUAN.** San Juan is home to a number of massive Spanish forts used to protect residents from a ceaseless procession of invaders hoping to exploit the huge gold and silver deposits that were never found. These include the El Morro Fortress, with its 18-foot-thick walls. The main tourist center is



Photo courtesy of the NAIC - Arecibo Observatory, a facility of the NSF.

No. This is not a swimming pool. It is Arecibo Observatory, the world's largest and most powerful radio/radar telescope.

housed in La Princesa, a 173-year-old Spanish penitentiary for political prisoners. And not far away is Camparra, where visitors can see the ruins of Ponce de León's 16th century settlement, and the 200-year-old Casa Blanca, former home of Ponce de León's descendants and now the location of a botanical gardens and a museum of 16th and

17th century artifacts. Go to meetpuertorico.com.

••• **VIVA LA SALSA.** Swimmers who want to put some twinkle to their toes should not forgo the numerous opportunities for dancing in Puerto Rico, home of some of the Caribbean's best dance clubs.

Check-in Times

For each of the following events, on-line check-in (at the USMS website, www.usms.org) opens Saturday, August 7 at noon AST* and closes at the same time as on-site deadlines. On-site check-in for all events will open Sunday, August 8 at 1:00 pm AST and will close according to the following schedule:

Date	Events	In Person/Online Check-in Deadline*
Mon., Aug. 9	800 Free 1500 Free	7:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m.
Tues., Aug. 10	400 IM All 200's and 100's	7:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m.
Wed., Aug. 11	400 Free (women) All 200's and 100's	7:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m.
Thurs, Aug. 12	400 Free (men) All 200's and 100's	7:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m.

* All times are Atlantic Standard Time (AST) which is the same as Eastern Daylight Time (EDT).



Two of the top spots for salsa dancing are at official hotels for this Summer Nationals – the Courtyard Marriott on Isla Verde and the Radisson Ambassador and Casino San Juan. Salsa lessons will be offered poolside at the USMS event. Go to salsacrazy.com/puertorico.htm.

••• **EL YUNQUE RAINFOREST.** Although small compared to other rainforest ecosystems in the Caribbean, the El Yunque National Forest Preserve is home to a dramat-

ic collection of rare plants and animals (including the remaining 85 Puerto Rican parrots), miniature waterfalls, and rain (averaging 240 inches a year). The forest is about 40 kilometers from San Juan, and guided tours are available. The favorite is the dwarf cloud forest in the higher elevations of the mountains. For details, go to elyunque.com.

••• **ARECIBO OBSERVATORY.**

Operated by the National Science Foundation, the Arecibo Observatory is the site of the largest and most powerful radio/radar telescope in the world. The original telescope was built in 1963, and has helped astronomers make thousands of discoveries about the universe, the solar system and global weather phenomena. Located in the mountains about an hour and fifteen minutes from San Juan. For information, go to naic.edu.

••• **CAMUY CAVES.** Not far from Arecibo Observatory is a huge cave system containing the third largest underground river in the world. Ride a tram through the forest to the entrance of a 200-foot-deep sinkhole lined with tropical vegetation, birds and butterflies, then take a 45-minute guided walk through the cave, with stalactites, stalagmites, waterfalls and other unusual formations. Go to parquesnacionalespr.com/

••• **EXPLORE THIS!** For a nearly inexhaustible supply of information about Puerto Rico, go to the website at places.eyetour.com/islandMap.

••• **AN EXTRA TIDBIT** – The city of San Juan earned its name by accident. Founded in 1521 as Puerto Rico (Spanish for “rich port”) on the island called San Juan de Bautista (after Saint John the Baptist), the Spanish-settled city came to be known as San Juan, and the island as Puerto Rico, after a mapmaker inadvertently switched the names of the island and the city.

Travel Information

Puerto Rico is a United States territory. U.S. citizens are not required to have a passport for travel to and from the island.

◆ GROUND TRANSPORTATION

The Luis Munoz Marin International Airport (SJU) is five miles from the Natatorium of San Juan, one mile from the hotels in Isla Verde and 6.5 miles from the hotel in Condado. Transportation is available from the airport to hotels via taxi. The taxis have preset fares of \$10 for the hotels in Isla Verde, and \$14 for the hotel in Condado. For more information visit, usms.org/comp/lnats10/.

◆ SHUTTLE SERVICE

Shuttle service is available from the Courtyard Marriott, Verdanza and Embassy Suites. Service will run from the hotel to the pool and back. The cost for a shuttle pass is \$50. Shuttle passes must be ordered in advance, at the time you sign up for the meet.

◆ HOTEL INFORMATION

Discounted hotel rooms blocks will be held until June 9, 2010. Use the group code: U.S. Masters Swimming. All hotels require a non-refundable deposit of one night at the time of reservation.

• *Hotels on the shuttle route to the Natatorium of San Juan: (these hotels are located in Isla Verde)*

Courtyard Marriott Isla Verde Beach Resort

www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/sjuiv-courtyard-ista-verde-beach-resort/
7012 Boca de Cangrejos Avenue
Isla Verde, Carolina,
Puerto Rico 00979

- **Reservations:** 787-791-0404
- **Rate:** \$129

This is the location of the Open Water Swim. 5.5 miles to natatorium

Verdanza Hotel

www.verdanzahotel.com/
8020 Tartak Street
Isla Verde, Carolina, Puerto Rico 00979
• **Reservations:** 787-625-9036
• **Rate:** \$111 - \$161
5 miles to the natatorium

Embassy Suites Hotel & Casino

embassysuites1.hilton.com/en_US/es/hotel/SJUESES-Embassy-Suites-San-Juan-Hotel-Casino/index.do
8000 Tartak Street
Isla Verde, Carolina,
Puerto Rico 00979
• **Reservations:** 787-791-0505
• **Rate:** \$140
5 miles to the natatorium

• *Hotel not on the shuttle route: (hotel located in Condado)*

Radisson Ambassador Plaza Hotel and Casino San Juan

www.radisson.com/sanjuanpr_ambassador
1369 Ashford Avenue
Condado, San Juan,
Puerto Rico 00907
• **Reservations:** 787-721-7300
• **Rate:** \$119 - \$139
2 miles to the natatorium

◆ PARKING

At the natatorium, the cost for parking is \$1 per day and is paid at the park entrance. Each of the host hotels is providing discounted parking for event participants.

2010 UNITED STATES MASTERS SWIMMING SUMMER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

San Juan, Puerto Rico

August 9 – 12, 2010



◆ LOCATION

The Olympic Natatorium of San Juan
Parque Central
San Juan, Puerto Rico 00907

◆ FACILITIES

The Natatorium of San Juan is a world-class facility with 10 50-meter lanes for competition. The pool is a uniform 10 feet deep. There is also a nine lane, 25 meter warm-up area in the diving well. The facility was modeled after the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Natatorium at Georgia Tech. The pools are covered to protect swimmers from the sun but open on the sides to provide an outdoor swimming environment. The natatorium seats 2,000 people and is located on the east side of San Juan's Central Park. Water temperature in the competition pool is kept at 79 degrees.

◆ WEB SITE

Official meet information, entry forms, and on-line registration are available at www.usms.org.

◆ ELIGIBILITY

The championships are open to any registered Masters swimmer at least 18 years of age as of August 8, 2010. Eighteen-year-olds must enter the meet by the entry deadline and only 18-year-olds may register with USMS on August 8 at the venue. A swimmer whose club affiliation differs from what is listed on his/her registration card must send either a new registration card or a letter from the local registrar with the new club affiliation and effective date. If there are questions about affiliation, the swimmer shall be entered as "unattached". Please clear up affiliation questions early by contacting the meet director. International entries must include a copy of the

swimmer's Masters Swimming registration card or a letter from their governing body stating that they are in good standing.

◆ AGE GROUPS

Age for the meet is determined as of 12/31/10, except that 18 year olds must be 18 by August 8, 2010.

◆ REGISTRATION

Prior to warm-ups or competition, all participants must register at the meet by signing an emergency card, safety information statement, and liability release. Registration will be held at the Natatorium of San Juan in Parque Central on Sunday, August 8, from 1:00pm to 6:00 p.m. and on Monday, August 9th through Thursday, August 12 from 6:30 a.m. until the end of each day's competition.

◆ SEEDING

All 50 meter events will be pre-seeded. All other events may be deck seeded by gender, time and age group. Women's heats will precede men's heats for each event except for the 800 and 1500 Free. Men and women may be seeded together for the 800 and 1500 Free and will be seeded slowest to fastest by entry. The 400 IM and 400 Free will be seeded slowest to fastest by entry time for each sex, regardless of age. All other events will be seeded by age group with the oldest age groups first, slowest to fastest within each age group.

◆ CHECK-IN

Coaches or teammates may check in for those swimmers whose travel plans do not permit check-in by the deadlines. Failure to check in will result in the swimmer being scratched from the event.

◆ CHECK-IN FOR EVENTS 100 METERS AND LONGER

Positive check-in is required separately for all deck seeded individual events 100 meters and longer. If the meet timeline allows, the host will pre-see the 100 and/or 200 meter events and only re-

quire check-in for the 400 IM, 400 Free, 800 Free, and 1500 Free, which may be done in person in the registration area, or via internet at www.usms.org. The decision on whether to pre-see an event will be listed on the Internet at www.usms.org by July 24, 2010.

◆ HEAT AND PSYCH SHEETS

Psych sheets for all individual events will be available on the www.usms.org website on or about July 23, 2010. Heat sheets for pre-seeded events will be available online around July 30, 2010. Heat sheets for deck-seeded events will be posted at various places around the pool for swimmers after the check-in deadlines.

◆ WARM-UP TIMES

The competition pool will be open for warm-ups on Sunday, August 8 from 1:00 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. On competition days, the competition pool will be open for warm-ups from 6:30 a.m. until 7:50 a.m. The warm-up pool will be available from 6:30 a.m. until conclusion of the final event. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday the competition pool will also be open for warm-up for 30 minutes following the last heat of the first event, the 400 IM and 400 Free. The competition pool will be open for 30 minutes following the last event each day.

◆ GENERAL MEETING

All swimmers, coaches, and officials should be represented at the general meeting at the Natatorium of San Juan on Sunday, August 8 at 4 p.m. There will be a discussion about the operation and conduct of the meet.

◆ GOLD MEDAL SPONSORSHIP

Gold Medal Sponsors help support the championship. In return for your support, you will receive V.I.P. hospitality and be recognized in the official program as supporters of Masters swimming. Hospitality will consist of breakfast, lunch and snacks during the meet. The cost of one sponsorship is \$75.

◆ ENTRY PROCEDURES

Use official entry form or a photocopy of the entire form.

Read all instructions and fill out the form completely. Incomplete forms or forms with "pending" in place of a USMS registration number will be rejected (except for 18 year olds who must enter by the meet entry deadline but may register with USMS at the venue on August 8). A legible copy of the swimmer's Masters registration card or verification from their governing body must accompany the entry form for international entrants. Failure to include a copy of your Masters registration card may result in the swimmer being charged a fee before being allowed to compete.

◆ ONLINE ENTRIES

Online entries are encouraged. This method provides immediate confirmation that the entry has been received. To enter online, go to www.usms.org.

◆ NATIONAL QUALIFYING TIMES/NUMBER OF EVENTS/SIXTH EVENT

Competitors may enter up to four events without meeting the national qualifying time (NQT), or a maximum of six events if they meet the NQTs, (i.e. have swum a time equal to or better than the NQTs during the past two years.) Individual swimmers are limited to three events per day. All events must include an entry time. If the meet is deemed too large, an athlete's sixth event will be dropped. On the entry form, indicate this event with a "6" in the designated column. No refunds will be given if a sixth event is dropped. Swimmers may enter either the 800 or 1500 free but not both.

◆ FEES

Fees are \$4 per individual event plus a surcharge per swimmer. The surcharge varies according to date of entry. Fees must accompany the entry form and must be paid in U.S. dollars by check or money order. Do not send cash. If there are questions about an entrant's check, full cash payment in U.S. dollars will be required before the entrant is allowed to swim. Refund requests must be in writing and received by July 8, 2010. No refunds will be given for events not swum. The surcharge also applies to relay swimmers not entered in an individual event.

Relay-only swimmers must submit an entry form with payment of the surcharge by the entry deadlines. All fees should be payable to 'U.S. Masters Swimming.'

◆ ENTRY DEADLINES/ VARIABLE SURCHARGE/ MAIL ENTRY

All U.S. entries must be postmarked with an official US postmark (no business meters).

SURCHARGE:

Entry postmarked by:

June 24

Entry received by: **July 1**

Amount: **\$50**

Entry postmarked by: **July 1**

Entry received by: **July 8**

Amount: **\$60**

Entries received after July 8th will be returned to sender. Online entries are encouraged and will be accepted until midnight EDT on each of the above 'Entry Received By' dates. No telephone or email entries will be accepted. Mail entries early. Include a self-addressed stamped envelope (SASE) with entry for proof of receipt. Do not send certified or overnight mail requiring a signature. Photocopy completed entry forms and personal checks for your records and verification.

◆ MAIL ENTRY TO:

Summer National Championships
U.S. Masters Swimming
Membership Office
PO Box 185
Londonderry, NH 03053 - 0185.

◆ RELAY INFORMATION

Swimmers may enter relays until 4 p.m. on the day before the relay is scheduled. Each competitor is allowed to swim only one freestyle relay, one medley relay, one mixed freestyle relay and one mixed medley relay. The entry fee for each relay is \$12 (cash or check only). Relay entries are submitted at the relay desk in the registration area. Each of the four members of the relay team must be registered with the same Masters club. The relay entry fee is in addition to individual events. Relay entry forms are available at www.usms.org.

◆ QUESTIONS?

Contact Mark Gill at (941) 387-4490 or by email at mark.gill@usms.org.

2010 U.S. MASTERS SWIMMING SUMMER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

Olympic Natatorium of San Juan, August 9-12, 2010 >>> Sanctioned by Liga de Natación Masters de Puerto Rico

Last name:* _____ First: _____ MI: _____
 Street Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____ Country: _____
 E-Mail: _____ Day Phone: _____ Eve. Phone: _____
 Age: _____ DOB: _____ Sex: _____ Emergency contact: _____ Phone: _____
 (12/31/10)**
 Club Name or Unattached: _____ USMS or International Reg. #: _____

* Print name as it appears on USMS registration card. ** 18-year-olds must be 18 on 8/8/10

Before completing, read meet information on previous page. Check-in is required for all deck-seeded events. Check-in for Monday starts the day before and ends at 7 a.m. on Monday for the 800 and 9 a.m. for the 1500. Check-in for all Tuesday through Thursday events ends at 7 a.m. the day of the event.

Event #	Entry Time Women	6	Event	Event #	Entry Time Men	6
Monday, Aug. 9, 2010			Warm-Up 6:30-7:50 a.m.		Start 8:00 a.m.	
1			800 Freestyle*	2		
3			1500 Freestyle*	4		
*Swimmers may enter either the 800 or 1500, but not both.						
Tuesday, Aug. 10, 2010			Warm-Up 6:30-7:50 a.m.		Start 8:00 a.m.	
5			400IM	6		
7			50 Butterfly	8		
9			200 Freestyle	10		
11			100 Backstroke	12		
13			200 Breaststroke	14		
15/16	See Relay Form		200 Mixed Medley Relay	15/16	See Relay Form	
17	See Relay Form		200 Freestyle Relay	18	See Relay Form	
Wednesday, Aug. 11, 2010			Warm-Up 6:30-7:50 a.m.		Start 8:00 a.m.	
19			400 Freestyle (Women)			
21			200 Backstroke	22		
23			50 Freestyle	24		
25			100 Breaststroke	26		
27			200 IM	28		
29			100 Butterfly	30		
31	See Relay Form		200 Medley Relay	32	See Relay Form	
Thursday, Aug. 12, 2010			Warm-Up 6:30-7:50 a.m.		Start 8:00 a.m.	
			400 Freestyle (Men)	34		
35/36	See Relay Form		200 Mixed Free Relay	35/36	See Relay Form	
37			50 Breaststroke	38		
39			200 Butterfly	40		
41			50 Backstroke	42		
43			100 Freestyle	44		

MAIL ENTRIES TO:

SUMMER NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

U.S. Masters Swimming
 Membership Office
 P.O. Box 185
 Londonderry, NH 03053-0185

- Entries must be postmarked by postmarked by **July 1, 2010** or received by **July 8, 2010**.

ENTRY CHECKLIST

- Entry form filled out completely?
- "6th event" clearly marked? (Mark 6th only if entering six events.)
- Seed times in proper columns?
- No more than three events per day entered?
- Liability release signed and dated?
- Fees payable to "USMS" enclosed?
- International registration card attached?
- SASE enclosed? (Indicate purpose on envelope.)
- Entry postmarked by **July 1, 2010** or received by **July 8, 2010**



••• FEES:

Meet Surcharge (required for all events)

If postmarked by June 24 \$50 _____

If postmarked by July 1 \$60 _____

Number of Individual Events x \$4 _____

Final Results x \$15 _____

Gold Medal Sponsor x \$75 _____

Shuttle Pass x \$50 _____

TOTAL FEES ENCLOSED _____

Internet entries will be accepted starting May 1, 2010. Please see usms.org for additional information. **Liability Release:** "I, the undersigned participant, intending to be legally bound, hereby certify that I am physically fit and have not been otherwise informed by a physician. I acknowledge that I am aware of all the risks inherent in Masters Swimming (training and competition), including possible permanent disability or death, and agree to assume all of those risks. AS A CONDITION OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THE MASTERS SWIMMING PROGRAM OR ANY ACTIVITIES INCIDENT THERETO, I HEREBY WAIVE ANY AND ALL RIGHTS TO CLAIMS FOR LOSS OR DAMAGES, INCLUDING ALL CLAIMS FOR LOSS OR DAMAGES CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE, ACTIVE OR PASSIVE, OF THE FOLLOWING: UNITED STATES MASTERS SWIMMING, INC., THE LOCAL MASTERS SWIMMING COMMITTEES, THE CLUBS, HOST FACILITIES, MEET SPONSORS, MEET COMMITTEES, OR ANY INDIVIDUALS OFFICIATING AT THE MEETS OR SUPERVISING SUCH ACTIVITIES. In addition, I agree to abide by and be governed by the rules of USMS."

Signature: _____

Date: _____