

"Swimming for Life"

Aqua Master

Award-winning newsletter of Oregon Masters Swimming



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Suzanne Rague, We Miss You

August 11, 1950 — June 4, 2022

Suzanne was a tireless USMS committee leader, swimmer, and coach who was dedicated to Masters Swimming.

Skip Thompson fondly remembers how he met Suzanne Rague. Their 30-plus-year friendship started through a mutual friend who attended Stanford University. "I told (my friend from Stanford) that I was in Masters Swimming, and he said he knew a classmate in his economics class that was a swimmer competing in the (Masters) program," says Thompson, a member of Michigan Masters. "One of the things he remembered about her was she was always getting the highest grades on the exams in class."

Thompson made a point to see if he could locate Rague at the national championship that year at Stanford. Because the meet welcomed 2,328 swimmers, he figured it was a slim chance that he would connect with her, but he tried nonetheless.

He noticed from the heat sheets she was swimming the 500 freestyle. When Rague was done, he introduced himself and told her he was excited to be there.

"She was very friendly, and I noticed she swam all of the tough events like the 200 fly, 400 IM and the mile, which she did at this meet and placed very well in all of them," he says. "She talked about being on the Stanford campus and how it has changed in the last 15 years. Besides her swimming, she



talked about being involved in music, and those were her passions."

Thompson was among the many friends, competitors, and teammates who said goodbye to their dear friend when Rague passed away in June.

Thompson says his admiration for Rague included her performances at USMS meets, as well as the time she took to pass along her swimming knowledge through coaching. She also had an interest in the virtual championships and open water swimming, which he remembers discussing with her. "I was just getting started in 1985, and I asked her if she did 5K or 10K swims. I was stunned to find out that after one year of open

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Fitness

Coach Colette Crabbe
OMS Fitness Chair



How To Design Your Own Workout

Part 2

In this article, we will try to be a little more specific about the principles we highlighted in our previous month's article and give you some examples on how to be creative and adapt your workouts just for you.

If you are working out by yourself, there are pros and cons, like everything in life, I guess. The major cons are: you do not have a coach to tell you what to do and correct your technical mistakes, you are missing on the social interactions linked with a team, and the friendly competition during practice to help you push yourself. However, not everything is lost. The pros are: there are resources available to find workouts (the USMS website has a workout page); you can design a specific workout just for you based on your goals, your own strengths and weaknesses; and you might often find compatible and friendly training partners at your own pool. Every lap pool in the country has slow, medium, and fast swimmers.

No matter if you are an elite swimmer or a complete novice, the main framework of the workout should always be the same: warm-up, main set or sets and cool down. The main differences will be in the number of repetitions, distance and sendoffs.

Warm up: It should take about 15 minutes. The older you are, the more warm-up you should do to oil the machinery and improve your range of motion slowly and progressively. If you wish, you can start on the deck with mainly some rotation of arms. I do not recommend doing stretching as your muscles are not warm yet. If you want to stretch, do it after swimming or during cool down. I also like to do a little kicking in warm-ups. Kicking is the key to good position and faster swimming. So do not avoid practicing your kick, especially if you are currently going nowhere and often hate it. Just do a little!!!!

Pre-set(s): the more novice you are, the more pre-sets you should do, focusing on a technical aspect. If you just learned to swim, your instructor probably gave you some drills such as in freestyle: breathing by turning your head and not lifting it, extending in front of your shoulders and not towards the middle, keeping your kick small and steady and hips at the surface. On the USMS website and in the *Aqua-Master*, there are articles related to technical aspects of all strokes with drills. Taking a few more lessons or attending a clinic might be the key for you to become more efficient in the water and making it easier to improve. "Do not fight with the water, the water is too strong, but the water will carry you if you are nice to it (no punching)". For the more advanced swimmers, a pre-set might be a kick set, or a drill/swim set to find your power position or to improve your weakest and/or your strongest stroke. Having a pre-set is also important on the days you want to work on speed.

Main set: the main set should have a purpose: long distance aerobic set, medium distance set, speed set, specific stroke set, individual medley set, turns and streamline set, kick set, etc. Based on your goals and preferences, you should be doing certain sets more often than others, but you should try to mix and match the sets to work on all parts of your swimming. It is important to work on your weaknesses, even if you do not like it, just do it moderately and it will bring tremendous results and improvements. For example, if you can barely swim fly or another stroke, why not include a few 25s in between your sets. Same with kicking or any weaknesses you might have. If you are the long-distance swimmer, why not sprint 2 x 25 all-out between repetitions.

Cool down: the cool down set is to slowly bring your heartbeat down and to get rid of the lactic acid. It should be 5 to 10 minutes or longer if you had a hard main set. It is also the best time to stretch if you wish. Enjoy that you have worked hard, it is time to relax. Swim easy, practice drills,

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Coaches Chair

Coach Kevin Cleary
OMS Coaches Chair



Rotten Eggs and Rubber Balls

by Kevin Cleary

Throughout our lives, from grade school through high school, regardless of the sport you played or activity you took part in, you no doubt heard from your teachers or coaches about the importance of attitude.

More often than not, you certainly heard classmates or teammates being called out for having a negative attitude... or perhaps you yourself experienced it from time to time!

It almost gets to the point of cliché, but let's take a moment to look at it from a different, more positive angle, and from a swimmer's perspective.

You can never really predict what's going to happen when you dive off that block with a season of hard work under your belt. Training (in any athletic endeavor) isn't an exact science, and there's always the chance that things won't go exactly as you want or expect.

Sometimes you exceed your wildest hopes, and other times you seem to inexplicably fall flat.

How you respond to victory or defeat is ultimately what defines your season.

Are you going to be a rotten egg or a rubber ball?

When a rotten egg falls and hits the ground, it causes a

terrible mess and an even worse smell, and the harder it hits, the more widespread the nastiness will be.

When a rubber ball hits the ground, it's only there for an instant before rebounding skyward, and most important of all, the harder it hits the ground, the higher it will bounce.

This applies to both negative and positive outcomes. We all know that one someone who is a rotten egg in the face of disappointment. They are not fun to be around, always complaining and moping and feeling sorry for themselves, dragging everyone around them down.

So too are rotten eggs after a great victory, boasting, bragging, beating their chests, and causing resentment among their friends and family.

But someone who is a rubber ball will take what they learned in defeat and use it not only to motivate themselves to go at it harder the next time, but as valuable experience and knowledge. They become stronger, and ultimately, more successful, because of it.

Likewise, after seeing tremendous success, a rubber ball uses that momentum and energy to rocket themselves to even greater heights. Sure, they enjoy their well-earned rewards, but are never satisfied and always looking for that next challenge.

So, no matter the outcome of your upcoming meet(s), are you going to be a rotten egg or a rubber ball?

Recent Records

Records are for Oregon LMSC Swimmers Only
 * = split

Cannonball Classic—LCM

June 11-12, 2022; Federal Way, Washington

Age Group	Name	Age	Event	Time	Record set
Women 60-64	Arlene Delmage	60	50 LCM Fly	33.67	Oregon
Women 60-64	Arlene Delmage	60	100 LCM Fly	1:17.02	Oregon, Zone
Women 60-64	Arlene Delmage	60	200 LCM Fly	2:53.20	Oregon, Zone
Women 65-69	Karen Andrus-Hughes	65	50 LCM Back	38.64	Oregon
Women 65-69	Karen Andrus-Hughes	65	100 LCM Back	1:25.81	Oregon
Women 80-84	Joy Ward	80	50 LCM Free	43.94	Oregon, Zone
Women 80-84	Joy Ward	80	50 LCM Back	49.01	Oregon, Zone
Women 80-84	Joy Ward	80	100 LCM Back	1:48.86	Oregon, Zone
Women 80-84	Joy Ward	80	200 LCM Back	3:51	Oregon, Zone, National
Women 80-84	Joy Ward	80	200 LCM I.M.	4:12.60	Oregon, Zone, National

Silver State Masters—LCM

July 10, 2022; Carson City, Nevada

Women 75-79	Pierson, Ginger L	76	200 LCM Breaststroke	4:36.58	Oregon, Zone
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Joy Ward, pictured at a recent practice with the Oregon City Tankers, set national records in the LCM 200 backstroke and IM at the Cannonball Classic in Federal Way in June. In addition, she set multiple zone records in other events. Congratulations Joy!

(See records set at the top of this page)

Swimmer Spotlight

—submitted by Karen Andrus-Hughes

Name: Mark Pinger
Age: 52
Occupation: General Manager, Arena North America
Team: Stafford Hills Club

That's my story and I am sticking to it.

It all started in a little town in the South of Germany. Growing up, I remember frequently being asked how long I have been swimming. I never knew how to answer that question because it seemed like I had been swimming for as long as I can remember. I doubt that I joined a swim team right after birth but it must have been just a short time later that my parents enrolled me in a learn-to-swim program. It was not swimming as a sport, it was swimming as a life skill. And I guess, I always stayed in a swim club from there on out.

The reason swimming became my sport was really by elimination. I played team hand ball, was on the track and field team and swam. I wasn't very good at any of those three sports but I definitely lacked the coordination to be a good ball handler. Team handball was out. I think I could have eventually developed into a good long distance runner but I didn't shine at whatever we were doing at track and field practice. That was the next one to go. Turns out I was going to be a swimmer. The point is, I wasn't necessarily very good at swimming but of those three sports, I was better at swimming than the other two.

What I have always loved about swimming is the peace and quiet. I love floating in the water. It is very peaceful. Floating in the water to me feels like what I imagine it might feel without gravity. You don't get pulled to the bottom, you float on top. This is also why we talk of swimming being low impact – it takes your body weight away and it's relatively easy on your joints. At least until you put on those big paddles and start swimming too many yards. As a sprinter, I had a lower risk than most. But I digress...

I continued to go to every practice offered in the little town where I lived. In the summer we swam outdoors and I often got sent to take a warm shower when the coach saw me shivering pretty badly. I was a stick figure with not much natural insulation. But I got a little bit better every year and I enjoyed the process and going to meets with the team.

When I was 17, I decided to move to a much bigger town with a top-tier swim team. Some were wondering why I made this decision. They thought I wasn't really fast enough for such a top-tier team. In my mind that was the wrong way to think about it. First you have to get good coaching, fast teammates and have access to a good facility, then the results will follow. In my first year on the new team, I qualified for the German Junior Nationals in the 400 free. It was my first time qualifying for Nationals. Unfortunately, I got last place at the meet. I continued to show up to every practice, worked hard and I made two decisions that helped me develop:

I decided it's time to put some muscles on my soon to be 2 meters/6'7" frame. I lifted weights six times a week for one and a half hours. I pushed myself a lot in the weight room. Often, I pushed so hard that every muscle hurt in the pool. I remember being in a lot of pain and I did try my best at swim practice but from the outside, it must have looked like I wasn't trying very hard. I remember one of the top swimmers on my team telling me "Mark, if you just swim easy for 2 hours you are not going to get any faster." There were definitely days where it looked like I was drowning but I always worked hard.

I figured that there is no substitute for speed. Speed makes everything easier. If you get faster in the 25, you get faster in the 50 and you can swim the first 50 of the 100 faster. However, it's hard to really focus on a short distance. If your race is the 400, you can swim a 50 at race pace in practice at any time of the year. If you swim the 50 free, you really have to be tapered and shaved to swim "race pace." That means you really

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Mark with Brazilian Olympian, Bruno Fratus, who is sponsored by Arena. Note: Bruno is standing on his tiptoes!

Yoga and Swimming

by Joe Oakes

In 1953, a year after I graduated from high school, my Aunt Mercedes Barbarosa gave me two books as late graduation presents, something that I could carry with me as I left for military service in Korea. The first was a copy of her beautifully illustrated book, *The Living Goya*. Aunt Mercedes, (We called her "Aunt Mercy") born in Spain, was a leading scholar of the Spanish artist Francisco Goya. Alas, as you might well guess, her Goya book was not a best seller in this country.

The second book was somewhat more interesting to me. It was called *Yoga and Health**, by Selvarajan Yesudian, a yoga instructor. I was young and active and curious, so I breezed through both books, then put them aside. I did not look at those books again for decades. Well, the decades passed, along with dear Aunt Mercedes. Life happened, school, military, a wonderful marriage, raising a family and a satisfactory career. Retirement.

A couple of years ago, it was time for us to do what is called "downsizing", when you get rid of many of the things that you have accumulated over the years. Among the things hiding in the boxes in the attic were the two books that Aunt Mercy gave me in 1953. Out of belated respect for Aunt Mercy, maybe guilt, I felt obliged to give both books the attention that I thought she would appreciate. Goya was instructive but sleep inducing. Yoga, on the other hand, held a few surprises for me so many decades later.

Before going any further, be aware that there are many schools of yoga, each approaching the subject from a different angle, some of them very different from my small and very limited experience. They come from an ancient and rich culture.

I will tell you what I got from Aunt Mercy's Yoga book. First, some of the *asanas*, yoga poses, are excellent for stretching a swimmer's muscles, especially those muscles that we tend to stress and overwork in our swim workouts. Variations of a few common *asanas* are part of my daily early morning workout at home. It would be difficult for me to describe them in detail, but with some research, if you are so inclined, you can come up with your own regimen. In fact, many of the stretches that you are already doing could very well be derived from yoga.

Here are a few of the things that I learned from the book. Chapter VI is entitled *Swimming: For Perfect Breath Regulation*. Let me give you a few of the author's quotes:

"Swimming is considered the most natural and perfect exercise. It is a natural exercise, not an artificial one." (True, when compared to baseball or cricket.)

"It is the only sport, because of the perfectly rhythmic movements, that requires us to breathe deeply in the *pranayama* manner." (Controlled, rhythmic breathing.)

"Swimming, when practiced regularly and in moderation, is extraordinarily beneficial to the health."

"Endurance swimmers unconsciously practice yoga. They breathe less frequently and blow the air out of their lungs (with) their faces under water. The whole secret is smooth, easy, rhythmic swimming without exertion."

It all comes down to *controlled, rhythmic breathing*, something that is an absolute necessity and common to both swimming and yoga. I believe that it is more applicable to longer distance swimming, especially in open water.

I cannot say with any certainty, but I suspect that yoga master Yesudian never even saw a 25-meter pool back in India so many decades ago. If so, did he ever have to make a turn every lap? Such a discontinuity would surely disrupt his composure.

But when I swim in open water, not during a race, my swimming is very much like meditation for me. I find myself in a state of deep relaxation, I breathe effortlessly and comfortably. I can concentrate on how my body feels, and on the pleasant sensation of water passing across my skin as I move through it, in it, one with it. There is a feeling of completion, of belonging. At the same time, I have to make sure that I am paying attention to what I am doing, and that I am aware of my surroundings.

After almost seventy years, I offer a belated "Thank you" to Aunt Mercy.

*(*Yoga and Health* by Selvarajan Yesudian is probably long out of print. It was published by Harper and Brothers, New York, in 1953.)



USMS Clinics at Hood River

Level 3 Coach Certification, Clinic Course for Coaches, Stroke Development Clinic, and Adult Learn-to-Swim Certification

Oregon Masters Swimming will be hosting several educational clinics in Hood River, Oregon, the weekend of October 29-30, 2022. United States Masters Swimming Level 3 Coach Certification, Clinic Course for Coaches, Stroke Development Clinic, and Adult Learn-to-Swim Instructor Certification Courses will be available. Oregon Masters coaches and athletes are encouraged to take advantage of this opportunity to be certified as a Level 3 Coach or an Adult Learn-to-Swim Instructor or participate in a Stroke Development Clinic. Scholarships are available for current Oregon Masters Swimming members and coaches.

USMS Level 3 Master Coach Certification

U.S. Masters Swimming is hosting a USMS Level 3 Masters coach certification course on Saturday, October 29, 2022, in Hood River, Oregon. You must have completed Levels 1&2 of the USMS Masters coach certification program and be a current USMS Member to participate in the course.

<https://www.clubassistant.com/club/clinics/reserve.cfm?c=1758&cid=93268>

Clinic Course for Coaches

The USMS Clinic Course for Coaches, offered by USMS Club and Coach Services, instructs the Masters coach or adult learn-to-swim instructor how to conceptualize, organize and deliver a stroke development clinic (SDC). The course consists of both a classroom and on-deck component. The registration for the clinic course is limited to 12 coaches per class. More information about the [USMS "How-to" Clinic Course for Coaches](#), including the course outline, can be found on the USMS website.

<https://www.clubassistant.com/club/clinics/reserve.cfm?c=1758&cid=92973>

Stroke Development Clinic

USMS is sponsoring a USMS stroke development and improvement clinic for swimmers of all abilities. All four strokes will be evaluated and corrected with the use of drills and coach instruction. Bill Brenner and local Masters coaches will be on hand to help you improve your technique and teach you drills that will enable you to continue to refine your stroke. Swimmers are not required to swim all strokes and may work on only those strokes they choose. All swimmers must be able to swim a minimum of 200 yards comfortably.

<https://www.clubassistant.com/club/clinics/reserve.cfm?c=1758&cid=92974>

ALTS Certification

More than a third of adults in the United States can't swim the length of a pool, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), which puts them at risk of being one of the 10 people who drown every day in this country. U.S. Masters Swimming's Adult Learn-to-Swim initiative is on the front lines to change this statistic. With education, outreach, and financial support, USMS is making more adults safer around water.

USMS's [Adult Learn-to-Swim Instructor Certification Program](#) trains and educates swim instructors in the methods and techniques that work best for adult learners.

<https://www.clubassistant.com/club/clinics/reserve.cfm?c=1758&cid=92971>

SUZANNE RAGUE

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water swimming, she attempted and successfully completed a 25-mile swim. She said she could not move her arms very well for a week. That pretty much sums up the determination she had in her life."

During her long connection with Masters Swimming, she held numerous committee positions and received many awards and honors for her tireless work on behalf of a sport and organization she believed in and loved.

"I remember Suzanne as a kind, generous, loyal friend," says Gail Dummer, a member of Michigan Masters. "I thoroughly enjoyed her company."

Dummer says Rague was interested in the people she met, and was always pleasant and gracious in her interactions. She and Rague traded light-hearted jibes about their respective alma maters, Stanford (Rague's) and the University of California, Berkeley (Dummer's), but they always respected one another in and out of the water.

"Her accomplishments at Stanford were as noteworthy as those at USMS," Dummer says. "I will miss Suzanne more than these words can express."

Rague served on the Finance, Legislation, Long Distance, and Recognition and Awards Committees, was a member of the Board of Directors from 1990–1997, and was USMS's controller for two years. In 1996, she received the Capt. Ransom J. Arthur M.D. Award, USMS's most prestigious volunteer award, one given annually to the volunteer who most furthers the objectives of the organization.

While serving as USMS's Auditor and Controller, Suzanne realized that USMS the organization could no longer operate optimally with manually maintained accounting records and financial statements. She commenced a three-year project, which included converting the auditing process to electronic, modifying the program to accommodate the Controller's functions, and then adding an additional module to produce the USMS tax return. These were truly "behind the scenes" activities that would not be recognized by the average swimmer but would benefit all.

Rague also coedited the USMS newsletter *WATERMARKS* and the magazine *SWIM* with Tamalpais Aquatics Masters mem-

ber Nancy Ridout, and served as the LMSC newsletter editor for the Metropolitan LMSC. She did all of this while working full-time as a controller for several small businesses.

Puget Sound Masters member Kathy Casey says she always knew that with Rague directing USMS's finances, there were never any question that the organization was in good hands.

"My thoughts on USMS financial questions during her USMS terms [serving] were 'Whatever Suzanne says,'" Casey says. "She never ever got 'ruffled' during any of her work. She was always kind and honest, and explained all the details so everyone could understand."

Another memory Casey has of Rague involves her amazing compassion and caring. "After losing an election for a USMS office, Suzanne was the first to seek me out and console me, in a quiet, compassionate manner," Casey says.

In the summer of 1993, Rague moved to Oregon from New York and started a new business, but remained involved with the sport. She joined the Oregon Masters Board of Directors right away. She volunteered to do data entry for meets, act as the LMSC auditor, chair the data entry/management committee for 1995 LC Nationals, and organize the 1995 One-Hour Postal swim.

Oregon Masters member Sandi Rousseau, who swam with Rague in Oregon, identifies Rague as having been a staunch supporter and contributor throughout her life no matter what she did, swimming, music, and even public broadcasting.

In the earlier years of Masters Swimming, she says, Rague was a sound voice that contributed to USMS entering into an organized, efficient, and balanced financial situation.

"Her knowledge and organizational skills really put USMS on a sound path forward," Rousseau says. "After she moved from New York to Oregon, she immediately became involved in our Oregon LMSC board of directors and was a major contributor to our leadership."

In addition to Suzanne's efforts as Auditor and Controller, she served as USMS Treasurer from 1989–1993 and was USMS Secretary at the time she received the Ransom Arthur Award. She also co-edited *SWIM* Magazine for several years in the early 1990's, and volunteered with the administration of the 1998 World Masters Games held in Oregon. Clearly, Suzanne's

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SUZANNE RAGUE

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service to USMS is exceptional and USMS has benefitted greatly from her membership and dedication.

Suzanne was very active in her LMSCs as well. She served as President, Treasurer, Top Ten & Sanctions, and Newsletter Editor for the Metropolitan LMSC. She created LMSC Bylaws for Metropolitan and Empire LMSC, recorded records, ran meets, coached a team and, not surprising – received the Empire Distinguished Service Award in 1992.

She continued to swim for fitness but had long ago dropped out of competition and USMS/OMS activities. Her passion over the past years has been her music — playing cello in the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and the Cornerstone Trio (chamber music).

Tributes from her Orchestra peers.



Suzanne with some musician friends

The Vancouver Symphony Orchestra (VSO) is deeply saddened by the loss of Suzanne Rague, cellist, philanthropist, champion of the arts, and beloved VSO family member. She will be greatly missed, and our hearts are with her loved ones at this time.

A message from VSO Conductor Maestro Salvador Brotons: "Suzanne will be a huge loss in our VSO cello section. I will always remember her passion for music, for advising me on new music repertoire, her faithfulness and commitment to the orchestra and as an incredible, well-rounded human being. Rest in peace."

From one of her trio partners: "My friend and musical col-

league, Suzanne Rague, died over the weekend after a short illness. Along with Dr Michael Liu, we formed The Cornerstone Trio, appropriately named as all (of us) are OPB Cornerstone Society members. We played numerous events for Friends of Chamber Music, at Terwilliger Plaza, where her mother lived, and other places. We had a lot of fun together. RIP Suzanne. You'll be missed."

(Her life was celebrated by a concert in The Old Church Concert Hall in, Portland, OR, on Tuesday, July 19, 2022. Performances were by the Northwest Piano Trio and Kevin Walsh, Baritone and John Strege, Piano)



Keto versus Starch-based Diets

John McDougall, MD

(There seems to be a surge in promoting the Keto Diet, hence the *Aqua Master* is revisiting that subject with Dr. McDougall.)

Dr. McDougall explains that low-carb diets cause weight loss by making people sick. Ketosis happens when the body is starving, which isn't a sustainable state to be in. Low-carb high-fat diets have also been associated with elevating cholesterol, blood pressure, as well as increasing the risk of developing heart disease and gout. No one wants to live in a state of sickness with no end in sight. Eating a low-fat, starch-based diet will help you lose weight while nourishing your body to optimum health.

To learn more, watch this short video.

https://www.drmcDougall.com/articles/mcdougall-moments/keto-versus-starch-based-diets/?utm_source=McDougall+Newsletter+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=b10b3ab741-Keto+versus+Starch-based+Diets&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_96b24b2189-b10b3ab741-91922949&mc_cid=b10b3ab741

FITNESS

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practice sculling, practice social kicking!!!!

Hope this helps you design your own favorite workout sets. When you have one you like, share it with one of your friends, he or she might enjoy it. Be creative: challenge yourself with speed, medium and long sets; mix and match different strokes; practice both your strengths and your weaknesses. Know what your time and sendoffs are, so you can be motivated by your improvements.

SWIMMER SPOTLIGHT

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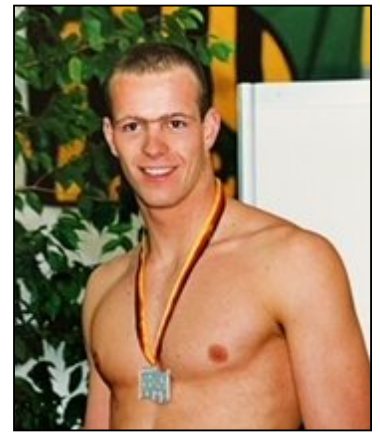
have to focus on swimming all out to at least get close to your race pace. When I saw some sprints at the end of the practice, I might have held back a little bit to make sure I could swim those sprints in the best quality possible. And when I saw a 4 x 50, descend one to four, it meant that I would swim 3 times very easy and 1 time all out. When you are a sprinter, it's not the average speed during practice that counts, it's the couple of times you really put some fast times on the board.

I started to focus on the shorter distances. In the 1980s, people were telling me that most swimmers start with the longer distances and as they get older they focus on the shorter distances. I think that was more related to swimmers getting burned out later in their career and making the switch to sprinting as it's just more fun. Scientifically, it's not true that you have to swim longer distances when you are young, although it might be a good idea not to specialize on any specific event too early on.

In any case, I would always swim the event from the front. In the beginning, I would have a fast first 50 and then drown. Then I got to 75 before I died. It was a matter of time until I put together the full 100 meters.

When I was 18, I swam the 100 freestyle at nationals in 53.9 in long course meters. A few swimmers my age went to their first Olympic Games. I got 9th place in my age group. I was very happy with my result as the year before my best time had only been 57s. When I had to serve in the German military, I was fast

enough to qualify for a special unit that got to train with the national coach. I had to do the basic military training for three months, but after that we were able to mostly focus on our sport and spent limited time doing military training. That was my time to put in many hours of high quality training and make every practice count.



Mark on the medal stand (Silver in the 50 free) at the 1992 Germany Olympic Trials.

I was becoming a good freestyle sprinter – swimming the 50 and the 100 – but I had two big deficiencies. The first one was related to kicking where I had trouble making the send offs, and I was so hopelessly slow that the national coach told me to buy some fins. Training with fins was not a standard practice at that time but the coach was tired of seeing me drown and having everyone wait for me at the end of the set. He said that with my kick, I would never be competitive at the national level, never mind at the international level. The second deficiency was related to my endurance. There was a special test we did to measure endurance. I was again below the basic requirement that was deemed necessary to become a good national or international swimmer. It was a different national coach that gave me the news this time. Two national coaches basically told me that I didn't have what it takes to become a really good swimmer.

The next thing is really important: I disregarded their advice. Take all the feedback you can, but don't put too much stock into the doubters.

I worked very hard in the pool and in the weight room. I continued to focus on sprinting and I continuously improved. My races were the 50 and 100 freestyle. In the 100 free I told myself that in order to win the race, I needed to lead in the first 50. As a sprinter, I swam the race from the front and just hoped that I would not be dying too badly in the last 25. When you tell yourself something, it becomes true.

But I got lucky. Going into the 1992 German Olympic Trials, I knew that I had a small chance to make the team. The 100 free was first. I was slow in prelims and didn't make it to the A final. At that time, there were no semifinals, just an A and a B final. I did make it to the B final but I wasn't happy with my

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SWIMMER SPOTLIGHT

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morning performance and the prospect of doing another race like that in the B final. I asked my coach to scratch the final and instead just focus on my chance in the 50 free later in the week. My coach wasn't having it and I was going to have to swim in that B final. I am not sure exactly what triggered the way I raced but I guess I was pretty mad and I had nothing to lose. I started the race as always but when the pain came, I just swam through the pain. Like a robot, I kept on swimming. I think this was the first time in my life that I swam 100%. Previously, when the pain would set in, I would tell myself that I can't win the race in the second half and I would feel sorry for myself. I thought I had also given it 100% in those races, but I clearly hadn't. I just didn't even know what it felt like to swim 100 meters freestyle 100%. I was 22 years old. You could say, I was a slow learner. Anyway, I swam a 50.03 in the B final. Nobody in the A final swam faster than me and I had the fastest second 50 meter split of all swimmers at the meet. Even swimmers that swam the 100 and were 200 specialists had a slower second 50. It's amazing what the mind can do. In my case, I successfully told myself that I just don't have a fast second 50 and that was true until that B final race in 1992.

I had the time to qualify in the 100 but I didn't swim in the final. Technically, they could not bring me to the Olympics, as a swimmer has to stay under that qualification time and get first or second. Later in the week, I qualified fair and square for the 50 freestyle by placing second and staying under the qualification time. I was officially on the team for the 50 and I was an option for the 4 x 100 freestyle relay. At the Olympics in Barcelona, I started off the relay in the morning and cracked the 50 second barrier, swimming a 49.75 to qualify for the evening relay. In the evening, I had the fastest split of the German team and brought home the bronze medal as the final swimmer of the relay.

It was no doubt a great experience to go to the Olympics and even better to bring home some hardware. However, if I wouldn't have gotten the opportunity, I would still cherish my time as a swimmer all the same. The community of my club team, the meets we went to together, the many meters we trained together, it would have been a great experience without ever going to the Olympics.

Four years later I got the opportunity to represent Germany again on the 4 x 100 freestyle relay at the Olympics in Atlanta. The end result was the same as in Barcelona but my time

was not as good. After Atlanta, I called it quits.

As so many swimmers do, after all that training, I needed a break. I tried to stay somewhat in shape but swim-

ming was no longer part of my workout routine. I graduated from the University of Miami, got a graduate degree in Pittsburgh and worked for a consulting firm in Pittsburgh for four years. The consulting lifestyle was not that great for my fitness. In 2003, my family moved to the Portland area where I started a job at Nike. The Nike campus is truly amazing and includes an indoor swimming pool. I joined a group of swimmers who practiced during lunch. I find it easier to train with a team and I loved being back in the pool again. With Nike, I was on assignment in Asia and Germany where I found it hard to keep swimming. I traveled a lot and didn't really find a Masters team close to where I lived. I stayed connected to the swimming community through my kids, who all three swam. When we returned to Oregon, I first joined the Oregon City Tankers Masters team. I loved the team, the workouts and the job that Tim Waud was doing there, but practice starts at 5 am which was a bit early for me. When Stafford Hills opened with an outdoor pool, just minutes from where I live and a more reasonable practice time of 5:45am, I found it irresistible not to switch. It's a great community of swimmers and having three different coaches provides a lot of variety. I love the team and have made many friends. And in the end, that's what it's all about. I am not trying to break any records but I do enjoy keeping in shape and I still love the feeling of being weightless in the water, tuning out everything when I am underwater. Knowing that there is a team who is happy to have me there, makes getting up in the morning so much easier.

I had a great time growing up swimming, got lucky to get to a pretty high level, still love the water and work for a swimwear brand. Oh, and the best part is that I met my wife during a swim training camp. Swimming's been good to me.



The Pinger family swam a medley relay together at the 2022 Association meet in Mollala - (l to r) Mark, Sebastian & Uli. Mark & Uli also have two daughters, Sidney & Robin.

Oregon Masters Swimming

Tentative Open Water Race Schedule for 2022 (as of 28 March 2022)

Date(s)	Days	Event/Venue	OR Location	Host	Event Director	Swims	OR Series Category	USMS Status
Sun 15 May	1	Beautiful Lake Juniper (pool)	Bend	COMA	Bob Bruce	1200-meter	Featured	Sanctioned
CANCELLED	†	Foster Lake-Open Water Swims	Sweet Home	COMA	Bob Bruce	4000-meter (2.4 mile) 2000-meter (1.2 mile)	Featured Featured	CANCELLED
Sun 10 July COMPLETE	1	Portland Bridge Swim in the Willamette River	Portland	PBS, LLC	Marisa Frieder	17-km downriver	Featured	Sanctioned
Sat 16 July COMPLETE	2	Southern Oregon Open Water Swims at Applegate Lake	Ruch	RVM	Todd Lantry	2500-meter (with 10,000-meter) 5000-meter (with 10,000-meter) 10,000-meter	Qualifying Qualifying Featured	Sanctioned
Sun 17 July COMPLETE						1500-meter (Ass'n Champs) 3 x 500-meter Pursuit Relay	Featured Participation	
Sat 30 July	1	Cascade Lakes Swim Festival at Elk Lake	Bend	COMA	John Malfatto	5000-meter 1500-meter	Featured Featured	Sanctioned
Sat 13 August	1	Oregon Coast Wild Swims at Eel Lake	Lakeside	NONE	NONE	Adventure Swims as desired	Featured	NO SANCTION

Swimmers must participate at three venues to be eligible for the Oregon Open Water Series. Swimmers may score Series points in all swims. Featured and qualifying events score points by place; participation events score 7 points. Top 10 scores count towards a swimmer's final Series total

Summary

Records & Results. . .

Cannonball Classic — LCM
Silver State Masters — LCM

Looking Ahead. . .

Pool Schedule

Date	Course	Swim	Location
August 21: Sunday	SCY	State Senior Games	Corvallis
December 10; Saturday	LCM	All-around Challenge	Bend

Registration for all events can be found at <http://swimoregon.org/events/>

Open Water Schedule (see page 13)

Quote for the Month. . .

“So many people along the way, whatever it is you aspire to do, will tell you it can’t be done. But all it takes is imagination. You dream. You plan. You reach.”
—Michael Phelps

From your USMS login, you can:

- Update your own USMS registration information—<https://www.usms.org/reg/member/updateinfo.php>
- Print Your Own USMS Membership Card—<https://www.usms.org/reg/getcard.php>

If you swim in any meet outside of Oregon and want your time considered for a record, you are the one who is responsible for notifying the OMS Records-keeper, Steve Darnell, at financialwizard2@comcast.net.