

Narwhal News

Sometime in June, 2021

We thought we'd have some fun with this edition of the Narwhal News by having some of YOU write the articles!!! So sit back and enjoy hearing from your teammates!

OPEN WATER SWIM

By Terri Graves

I started thinking about Open water swim when I saw pictures of Kelly Harrigan swimming for miles in the lake. She posted that she was doing some beginner Open water swim. I responded " I AM IN" then quickly started questioning that decision..... What about fish nibbling on my legs? Fish poop touching my face? Tangling up in fish line?



Two weeks ago was my first open water swim at Saguaro lake with Kelly's group. The thought of putting my face in the water panicked me because the water is pukey green. And again questioned why I would open water swim when I have a beautiful clear water Skyline pool with Laura and Paul Smith cheering me on? Then I see Kristina, Kris and their daughter and thought if they are doing this it must be okay, hahaha!! Soon as I put my head in the water my panic went away every negative thought disappeared as I swam 1200 yards then the next week returned to Saguaro and swam 1800 yards!! I never saw a fish, I never felt anything on my legs (wore a wet suit so even if there was I wouldn't know it) no loch ness monsters, zombies or nightmares!! I LOVED it

And lastly, stay safe, I had Khristina and Kris's dtr who remained beside me on their paddle board and also a buoy. And the second time I went my husband decided to buy a paddle board and stay beside me, so we are making this a thing we can do together. Try it, don't be a fuddy Dud, lol. Have FuN

The Thrill of Victory and the Agony of Defeat – My First Swim Meet

By Raymond Marciniak



I sat through plenty of swim meets as my kids grew up but never thought it would happen. I could barely swim as a kid and sank like a rock. I swim for fitness as many do and marvel at the skill and speed of others.

I loved every minute of my first meet. Yes, I was scared and wondered if I would even finish or how slow I would be. Oh, did I mention missing one of my heats. Yes, I used to yell at my kids for this and had to break down and call them to confess. My first race was the 50 Free, I was nervous, checked my goggles about 3 times

and didn't move until the buzzer/horn went off. I scored a perfect 10 on the belly flop. The thrill of finishing that 50 and achieving my best time ever was a memory of a life time. At 63 years old and only swimming for the last 5 or so years, I DID IT - swam 2 events and a relay. Checked this off on the bucket list!

I think everyone should enter these swim meets. You have great coaches, met fantastic people who swam all their life, others that are coming back from the days in high school or just out for fitness and fun. The best of all, everyone I met was more than willing to help with turns, rules, video tape you, encourage and give the incentive to continue and do another meet (which I did).

It took me a long time to get the courage up to enter a meet and now I wonder why I waited so long. I told my kids how much fun it was and why I used to love to watch them swim...now I get to do the swimming.

Why I swim Age Group AND Masters Meets

By Lindsey "Batch" Urbatchka

Here's some reasons why I continue to swim in Age Group meets (pre-pandemic and now). **I love to race!** I've always loved to race. It's you and the clock and if you are lucky some people to push/pull you. When I finished my college career on a Saturday night, my student assistant coach Charlie said, "So you'll be with me at masters Monday?"....UHHHHH.....I said give me til Wednesday, Charlie. Good thing too, I had to go do "random" drug test Monday am. But I digress, so I jumped into Masters that

fateful Wednesday and have been here ever since. Masters gives us a group of friends who are choosing to come to practice. NO ONE is MAKING them. NO ONE is PAYING them. Therein lies a huge difference. Much less bitching and complaining.

We are lucky we get to practice and even luckier we live somewhere our coaches work extremely hard to give racing opportunities. Did I mention **I LOVE TO RACE?**

Have you ever not been able to race? Surgery took you out? Illness? Injury? Talk about depressing, as our swimming is intricately tied to our mental health.

I've been there, broken foot, 2 shoulder surgeries, low back surgery, double mastectomy, c-section....reactivated Epstein Barr, Adrenal failure...and those absences are reminders - **NEVER TAKE YOUR ABILITY FOR GRANTED.** I have only love and gratitude for each coaching, practice, and race opportunity and should too! No matter how tough, it's under 90 minutes, you'll make it, trust me. (And if you feel like you are going to die, put your fins on and try again).

Back to those reasons-

1. **OPPORTUNITY** (BY FAR MY NUMBER 1 REASON)

- a. There are many more opportunities to race when you combine the masters and the age group calendars.
 - i. During times when we don't have a lot of masters meets, I can look into entering a USA Age group meet.
1. Sometimes there are qualifying times and other times there are not, so literally anyone can compete.
 - a. All you need is your USA registration (similar to USMS registration and can be done online).
 - ii. Prelims and finals = more opportunities.
 1. If you make finals, you can choose to come back and go for it again...or maybe...
 2. You made finals and you are happy with your time. What about getting a split time to submit to masters in finals?

2. It's a **DIFFERENT TYPE OF RACE** (sick of competing against the same "old" folks 😊)

- a. In masters, I'm typically next to males, who will enter slower times and then, sometimes, I fight waves and wakes. It's nice to be in a tighter heat with all females. I feel like I get a better race.
- b. Personal challenge- how long am I able to compete with these "kids"?
- c. The kids
 - i. The **LOVE and EXCITEMENT** is fun to watch on the kids' faces. Yes there are still your complainers-more so in the teens- but the atmosphere is typically more happy and exciting.
 1. Especially when they go best times!

- a. Secretly I think the parents like seeing us “elders” out there too, it’s not like USA swimming has an age limit, so why should we cap ourselves?
 - i. I’ve made some great kid friends over the years and watching them grow is REALLY COOL. Some are even married and starting families. (Still don’t think I’m old? I’ve been to the weddings!)
- 3. More **REST and FLEXIBILITY** (no not touching your toes flexible)!!!
 - a. Kids meets take longer so typically you have more time in between events.
 - b. They also are 2 - 3 days long, so maybe you just swim one event per day. Or just 2 events on one day and be done.
 - c. Who doesn’t love taper?
- 4. Submitting **TIMES** for masters.
 - a. Did you know all USA sanctioned meet times can be submitted to USMS for ranking???
 - i. You just have to email the meet results to Barry Roth.
- 5. **FITNESS** - racing gives a true testament to fitness level.
 - a. I run a company- Wellness PharmD Consulting, that specializes in Elite Health and Energy support- Giving you optimal performance in life. There is so much more to your fitness than practice. What you do outside the pool is just as important.

So, if you want more opportunities, a guaranteed good time, with some extra rest, consider getting that USA registration, and entering a USA meet. I’ll be there too, so you won’t be the only old head on deck in a swim suit. 😊 And I promise not to complain, and I will cheer extra loud like Laura so you still feel like your masters self.



Wrap Up:

As you can see by your teammates' articles, we all have our own reasons to swim. Some of us are competitive. Some of us love the social aspect of workouts. Others just want to stay in shape. There's no right, there's no wrong....just come to the pool and do your thing!

We appreciate how each of you have displayed such great sportsmanship since the summer schedule has begun and lane space is tight. Look at it as an opportunity to get to make some new friends! An opportunity to dial in your "lane etiquette". Keep it fun, gang....keep it fun!!!

GoOOOoOOOoo MAC!!!