

The Wet Gazette

The LMSC for Virginia - Serving Swimmers in Virginia And West Virginia
June 15, 2010

Virginia Swimmers Were Outstanding at Nationals

The USMS SCY National Championship was held in Atlanta, Georgia, May 20-23. The meet was at Georgia Tech in the pool built for the 1996 Olympics. Virginia had swimmers from four teams: Warrenton (WAVA), Quest Masters (QMST), Snowbird Aquatics (SNOW), and Virginia Masters (VMST).

Nine swimmers from Virginia won national championships and three relays placed first.

Individual winners were:

Kate Hibbard, 25, VMST, 200 back, 2:07.06

Pam Dameron, 64, QMST, 200 breast, 3:11.72

Beth Schreiner, 69, VMST, 50 free, 30.90

Betsy Durrant, 68, VMST, 1650 free, 26:07.35

Barbara Zaremski, 72, VMST, 50 back, 44.45

Laura Walker, 72, VMST, 200 back, 3:35.67

Jeanne Meredith, 81, VMST, 50 free, 49.73

Marianna Berkley, 87, VMST, 200 breast,

6:00.91; 100 IM, 2:33.35; 200 IM 5:50.05

Chris Stevenson, 45, VMST, 50 back, 24.28; 100

back, 52.21; 200 back, 1:56.52

Relay winners were:

•VMST Women 65+ Freestyle Relay: **Betsy Durrant, Ida Hlavacek, Beth Schreiner, Barbara Zaremski**, 2:07.81 – new national record!

•VMST Women 65+ Medley Relay: **Judy Martin, Betsy Durrant, Ida Hlavacek, Barbara Zaremski**, 2:51.84

•VMST Men 65+ Medley Relay: **Sandy Galletly, Warner Brundage, Ken Novell, Harry Sober**, 2:11.46

Six national records were broken by Virginia swimmers. **Chris Stevenson** (VMST, 45-49) led the way with three new backstroke records. The VMST Women's 65+ Freestyle Relay (**Durrant, Hlavacek, Schreiner, Zaremski**) broke the record which was set in 1995.

Most interesting was the fact that **Lisa Bennett** (VMST, 50-54) broke two national records – the 50 and 100 breaststroke events – but finished second in both events.

VMST – National Champions

Scoring for national championships is done in two categories: Regional teams and Local teams. The Regional team designation was created for teams like North Carolina, Georgia, Michigan, and others that combine all teams in the LMSC and swim as one team at nationals. For the rest of the year, these teams swim under the local team name (in NC there is RAM from Raleigh, MAC from Charlotte, etc.). Although VMST encompasses a large geographic area, the team is never subdivided into smaller teams or workout groups. Therefore, VMST is considered a “Local” team.

With 33 swimmers, VMST outscored The Olympic Club and Walnut Creek to finish first. I believe it was a surprise to everyone. Many thanks to Chris Stevenson for coordinating the relays and to all the swimmers who took part. It was a team effort and everyone deserves a sincere “Congratulations” and a pat on the back.



Georgia Tech Pool – two 10 lane courses, scoreboard, lots of seating. Diving pool in lower right was used for warm-up and cool-down.

See page 3 for “Questions for the Coach.”

See page 6 for Bob Schreiner’s article on Atlanta.

See “Important News from the Registrar” on p 4.



If you do not have internet access, contact me (Editor's information below), and I will send you an entry.

June 27: Jack King One Mile Ocean, Virginia Beach, Entry is posted at www.vaswim.org

July 10: Chris Greene Lake, Charlottesville. USMS National Championship. Entry information is posted at www.vaswim.org. Online entries are preferred.

July 25: LC at Hains Point in DC. Entry info at www.PVMasters.org

Aug 9-12: LC Nationals, San Juan, PR. Entry is in the latest SWIMMER Magazine. Online entries at www.usms.org.

Aug 21-22: LC Zone Meet at U of MD in College Park. Entry will be on Potomac Valley website.

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Virginia LMSC Website
www.vaswim.org

USMS Website
www.usms.org

Latest info on all levels of swimming
www.SwimmingWorldMagazine.com

Nearby LMSCs
North Carolina: www.ncmasters.org
Maryland: www.maryland@usms.org
Potomac Valley: www.PVMasters.org

Colonies Zone
www.ColoniesZone.org

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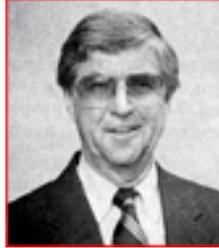
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QUESTIONS FOR COACH DON EASTERLING

In the May newsletter, Chris Stevenson wrote that Coach Easterling, former coach at NC State University had “failed at retirement” (I love that phrase) and among other things wants to be involved with Masters Swimming. Chris made arrangements for Coach Easterling to answer questions in our newsletter. Send questions to Chris (address on page 2). Chris did a telephone interview to get the responses to this month’s questions.



Hi Coach Easterling,

Congratulations on all your successes and for the many champions you created. It was an honor and a pleasure to swim for you!

I know that when I swam for you, you taught us to kick flutter off the walls in all freestyle races. I would like to know your thoughts on the “new” dolphin kicking off the walls for freestyle swims. I race events from the 100 to the 1650. I saw the Olympians dolphin kicking off the walls on freestyle. When I try it, it seems to take up a lot more energy for me and I come up in oxygen debt. What do you recommend for an “old gal” like me? Should an old dog (or old wolf) like myself learn this new trick?

Submitted by Kelly Parker Palace, former NCAA All-American and Olympic Trials qualifier.

You can use the dolphin kick but it takes constant practice. Obviously you need to have a strong dolphin kick to use it in a race. Coach Easterling has become a big fan of the *monofin* for increasing flexibility and endurance in kicking. His swimmers use it with vertical kicking, underwater kicking and surface kicking; Coach Easterling estimates that his current best high-school butterflyer (1:48 in the 200 fly) uses fins for about 50% of his sets in practice. The monofin is a wonderful tool that not only helps improve kicking, but gives you confidence by allowing you to swim very fast in practice. Your body position rises out of

the water and you become accustomed to having a “motorboat” behind you in your races.

For longer races, Coach Easterling feels you can get 3-4 dolphin kicks off every wall if you train for it. One of the trickiest part is the transition from dolphin to flutter kick: you have to coordinate that transition with the first arm pull of your breakout. Make sure that you pull with the deeper of your arms during the breakout.

Coach Easterling,

How can I help a swimmer to correct his severe crossover as his hand passes underneath in freestyle?

**Thanks,
Priscilla Betttis, VMST Coach**

This is tough to correct, because the crossover is a mistake that can feel so good: you feel like you are moving a lot of water past you (but you aren’t). The swimmer possibly has a poor thumb position (thumb first) and doesn’t roll his body enough.

It is important to control the surface water during the entry, there should be some lift so that there is less drag. The swimmer should think of a board down the middle of his body that the arm does not cross. During the arm pull, visualize the hand staying still as you push your body past it. It is like putting your hands on the ladder and levering yourself up: **hold the water** during your stroke. The hand speed should increase throughout the stroke. One arm drills are a good way to correct the crossover problem, concentrating on these aspects and the body roll.

Do you have a question for Coach Easterling?

A member of the ASCA Hall of Fame, and the coach of numerous former NCAA champions and Olympic medalists, former NCSU coach Don Easterling invites your questions about swimming. Please submit your questions to me by email (chrisstevenson@usms.org) or by phone (804-282-0124).



swimoraphics.com

Important News From The Registrar

By Lisa Bennett

The 2010 Jack King One-Mile Ocean Swim will be held on June 27 in Virginia Beach and it is fast approaching. However in order for all things to run smoothly (like actually getting yourself entered into the event!) you need to send the correct forms/fees to the proper person! As the Registrar, I register swimmers with the LMSC/USMS. If you send me the race entry form/check, or even the one-event registration form, I cannot guarantee that it will make it June McDaniels who is the race director. I will be out of town the week before that race, so if you do send me the entry/check/one-event form, it will not get to June and I am not sure how you will go about getting entered into that race. June's address is printed on the entry form as well as the one-event form, and both get sent to her. As a bonus request...if you do need to fill out that one-event registration form, please make sure that all of the information is filled-in...and legible, as this information has to be entered onto a master list for our national office.

Thank you all for your cooperation, and best of luck at the Ocean Swim! (p.s. if you know anyone else that is going to swim this race, please pass on this information!)

Get Ready for Summer!

Open Water Events

Jack King One-Mile Ocean Swim, June 27,
in Virginia Beach.

Chris Greene Lake 2-Mile National Championship,
July 10, in Charlottesville.

LC Meets

July 25, Hains Point in DC.

Aug 9-12, LC Nationals in San Juan, PR

August 21-22, LC Zones at U of MD, College Park

See Calendar on page 2 for entry information.

Ariel's Collection

Ariel Lotz and her notebook were seen all around the pool in Atlanta. Ariel was collecting humorous "sayings" that she heard during the meet.

"I should have swum the 1000..." (mental note as swimmer was at the 1200 mark of the 1650)

"Why doesn't my suit say 'blue seventy' on it?"
"Cuz it's inside out!"

"What was your time?" "I don't know. I didn't look. I was too busy trying to breathe."

"Where's the wall? Where's the wall? WHERE'S THE &@#! WALL?!?!?!?"

"I felt like I was walking in a man forest!"
(walking across the pool deck during the Men's 50 Freestyle event.

"I'm so sorry about the snot I left in the pool."

"I beat my age! I beat my age! For the first time, I beat my age." This was from a justifiably proud Charlie Tupitza, age 55, who swam 54.56 on his 100 free. Charlie is the coach and meet director in Warrenton.

From Rob Butcher USMS Executive Director

Not everyone is aware that USA Swimming owns SwimNetwork.com. SwimNetwork, which targets the younger demographic, has provided continuous coverage of our Nationals.

Four of the top five stories on SwimNetwork.com's home page are about our Nationals. They are syndicating our daily video highlights. With the number of Olympians swimming in the Nationals, this type of exposure creates a connection to the younger swimmers that Masters is "cool." This is tremendous exposure and publicity for USMS!

SWIMMING

The Magazine for Professional Swimming Coaches (Volume 2010 Issue 01)

Editor's Note: In the latest issue of the ASCA magazine, there were two articles that I think may be of interest to our members. For the first article I have not used the entire article, just excerpts. The second article is complete.

How Your Swimmers Can Improve Their Times Without Swimming Any Faster

By Coach Buddy Baarcke

Impossible! Makes no sense! But let me explain... Without swimming at a higher rate of speed, a swimmer can go faster by:

1. Going straight. Too many swimmers swim in meets just as they do in practice: in circles. A 1650 swimmer who veers 12 inches off on each length will go 66 feet too far....
2. Pushing off immediately. Many swimmers make fast flip turns but do not push off the instant the feet touch the wall. Why? Because their hands are not ready: up by the head before the feet touch the wall. Our 1650 swimmer has wasted probably 1/10th of a second per turn ...
3. The finish. How many swimmers, no matter what the length of the race, do a proper, big-time, "professional" finish? Maybe half of them. A really great finish might be only hundredths of a second faster than a poor one, but right at the end of most races, even some 1650s, hundredths count... A freestyler must quit breathing four or five strokes out and keep his eyes on the wall. Only by not looking away, by not breathing on those last few strokes, can a perfect touch be made. And proper finishes must also be practiced for the other three strokes.

...So, all of these things apply to all distances – even the 50.

Swimmers must go absolutely straight and must push off from turns the instant their feet touch the wall. And, to execute a great touch, freestylers

and flyers must quit breathing the last few strokes and focus on the wall.

Helping Swimmers Zero In on the Perfect Push-Off

By Bill McKeon

There are basically only two kinds of push-offs: good ones and bad ones. The good ones give swimmers a forceful burst of speed off every wall. The bad ones tend to grind to a halt before they ever get started. When a swimmer loses a race by a narrow margin, push-offs sometimes take the blame for the loss. By the same token, push-offs sometimes get the credit when a swimmer wins by a touch. Either way, it's easy to see that push-offs have potential to make or break a race.

When performed correctly, a push-off employs the human body's most effective posture for minimizing resistance through water. And resistance-reducing measures are clearly called for since water is about 800 times denser than air. In fact, water is so dense that a bullet fired into a body of water will lose all velocity after traveling less than eight feet. It is water's tremendous stopping power that compels swimmers to minimize resistance whenever possible.

Once swimmers understand just how dense water is, they invariably want to know how this affects their swimming. The answer is that resistance increases exponentially with speed. A doubling of speed equals a tripling of resistance when a swimmer is traveling beneath the surface. A streamlined push-off is a potent countermeasure to the ever-increasing resistance that comes with speed.

In the world of the natural-born swimmers, the common dolphin travels at speeds up to 23 miles per hour. The barracuda can reach speeds up to 27 miles per hour. Human swimmers are slow by comparison, topping out at around six miles per hour. One reason for this is that the human physique cannot rival the sleek form of most aquatic
*See **Push-Off** on page 11.*

VMST News

Recent Happenings

1. A great time and many great times at nationals in Atlanta! It was a combined team effort. We entered a total of 21 relays, and as far I could tell, they all made it to the blocks with 4 swimmers! I think we are getting better in letting team members know when they are on a relay, although we had a few close calls. Chris sent out tentative relays the week before the meet and I posted relay teams on the wall where we were sitting. We still have solved the problem of notifying swimmers who do not use email.

2. **Sam Neuhaus**, from the Chinn group, was our youngest swimmer. She is 18. **Marianna Berkley**, from Virginia Beach, was our oldest at 87. I love our diversity.

3. Old friends and teammates. One of the highlights of the meet for me (Betsy) was seeing three former VMST swimmers.

•**Michael Dougherty** left Virginia Beach around 1994. He and Heidi and their two children relocated to Bozeman, Montana. Mike was one of two swimmers in the meet from Montana. He was very active in VMST, helping at meets and open water swims, and compiling records.

•**Lee Golusinski** swam with VMST when he was in medical school at MCV. I don't know how long ago he left Virginia, but he's 45 now so it's been a few years. Lee now practices in Atlanta and swims with Georgia Masters.

•**Michael Slowey** was in Virginia Beach while served in the Navy. His medical practice took him to the Charlotte area and to NJ, but he continued to represent VMST. He is now settled in Charleston at the Medical University of SC. He now swims for Palmetto Masters.

4. New team stuff. We have a new team flag, which worked out well for this meet. It is nylon, so it folds up to pack. There are grommets across the top, so it is easy to hang. New black t-shirts with the logo in purple on the front (where a pocket would be), and Virginia Masters Swim Team written out on the back. They look good. These are for sale at cost - \$13. Let me know if want one.

The gift for team members who go to nationals this year is a black bag (lightweight backpack) with a zippered section and an embroidered VMST logo.

These will be for sale after LC nationals. I don't know the cost yet.

Future Happenings

1. If you are going to **San Juan for LC nationals**, let me know. I don't have a feel for how large or small this meet might be. The only VMST members who have told me they are going are: Kitten Braaten, Susan Marens, Marcia Barry, Chris Frogley, Sandy Galletly, and me. I know there are others, so let me know.

2. Make plans for the LC Zone Meet, August 21-22, at the U of MD in College Park. This is a great pool. I haven't seen an entry yet, but I'm pretty sure that the long relays will be offered.

To see current World Records for longer relays, check out:

<http://www.fina.org/database/main/records.php>

New flag -



2008
Olympian
Cullen Jones
with Alvin
Richardson.



VMST AT ATLANTA: LOTS OF GRIT WITHOUT THE GRITS

(by Bob Schreiner)

It has been six years since U.S. Masters Swimming held its national championships in a locale with a southern flavor. We all remember Savannah in 2004 where all the ladies wore frilly things (out of the water) and the men were torn between wearing spats and going sockless—clearly I’m speaking of those silly swimmers from Walnut Creek and The Olympic Club, not our own very proper VMST team. This time, the venue was the Georgia Tech campus, and USMS welcomed more than 1,950 swimmers to Atlanta for the 2010 Short Course National Championships, held 20–23 May 2010.

The school’s Campus Recreation Center—the proper if mundane name for the university’s official indoor swimming hole—was built to host the 1996 Olympics. It is a grand facility—with more water inside those four walls than in the entire western half of Kansas—but I cannot believe it doesn’t bear a more elegant name, one that people would easily identify with world-class swimming activities, like the Betsy Durrant Memorial Pool or the Mark Gill Natatorium. We had a “campus recreation center” where I went to school in that great state of Kansas, and ever since those youthful days I’ve identified those three humdrum words with linoleum, a greasy grill, a bleachers-only basketball court, WWII-style metal lockers, more linoleum, and a small swimming pool that looked like it was designed by some stiff-collared Victorian architect who had no idea that recreation and swimming could be compatible.

The Atlanta championships were held over a four-day period, which allowed most swimmers plenty of spare time to enjoy the capital of “The Peach State” while humming *Georgia on My Mind*. The city and immediate area are blessed with many sightseeing and activity options, but the city itself is cursed with an inadequate and confusing road network. Nothing like having two major Interstate highways (I-75 and I-85) merge right in the center of the city to form a high-speed corridor that is so packed with vehicles that high speeds are doable only between the hours of 2:00 and 4:00 am. At all other times, this dual highway disaster resembles a longitudinal parking lot with a one-lane exit.

In addition to the interstate mess, the city planners must have relied on the same clever knucklehead who came up with the Campus Recreation Center moniker to name the city’s streets and buildings. Obviously vocabulary challenged, he quickly ran out of titles so he named as many after the word “peach” as he could legally get away with. With my well-deserved reputation for truth and accuracy (ahem), you must believe me when I tell you that in the city of Atlanta there are no less than 47 streets, roads, avenues, courts, lanes, and parkways identified with the name “Peachtree.” A visitor’s nightmare would be receiving route instructions to nearly anyplace in the city. The directions would almost certainly be something like, “Take either Interstate 75 or 85 into town and hope you survive, then grab a left on North Peachtree and follow it until it runs into South Peachtree. You can’t miss it on the right, just past Peachtree Square.” (And, let’s be honest, readers: How many of you actually saw a peach tree in the city?) It’s a good thing the state’s motto didn’t evolve from other horticultural names, such as chrysanthemum or bougainvillea or skunk cabbage.

Before we get to the swimming results (you thought I forgot, didn’t you?), I must comment also on the city’s culinary traditions and habits. Beth and I always seek out fine restaurants when we travel, and such was the case in Atlanta. We had a truly fabulous meal, for example, at the city’s most renowned Italian restaurant, Veni Vidi Vici (which for you Latin challenged diners means, “I came, I saw, I sinned.”) We dined another night at Atlanta’s premier Asian restaurant, Nan Thai (which I would translate as, “Don’t use fire extinguisher directly in mouth.”) While both establishments can honestly claim to serve genuine Italian and Thai cuisine, respectively, where else but in Atlanta would great chefs put a local twist to classic recipes? Ever had “Grits Parmigiano” or “Fried green tomato carbonara?” Or, how about “Fried green tomato curry with roasted grits and garlic?” I am sure that somewhere between West Peachtree Street and East Peachtree Parkway, some Atlanta joint serves “Southern fried Dover sole, with grits.” (I made all my pre-dinner martinis in my own room out of fear of having a skewered fried green tomato show up in one ordered at the hotel or restaurant bar.) Several questions leap to this sick mind: “Do tomatoes in

See *Grits* on page 8.

Grits continued from page 7.

Georgia ever ripen?” “Is the first time you give small children in the South grits considered a reward or a punishment?” “If the peach is the state food, why isn’t it served on the side instead of green tomatoes or grits?” “How many calories are automatically associated with the words ‘Southern fried’?”

Meanwhile, during the championships second event on Thursday, the 1650-yard freestyle, VMST coach, *confidante*, and hand holder Betsy Durrant proved it is best to lead by example with a winning effort. Eagle-eyed Mark Gill—the Vince Scully-like voice of Masters swimming—however, spotted Betsy’s only open turn of 65 in the race and razzed her as only Mark can do. Close behind Betsy in 3rd place was teammate Ida Hlavacek. What a great start for the gritty (pun intended) VMST contingent—most of whom, believe it or not, don’t like grits! And, speaking of Mark, I noticed he was one of three announcers at the meet. Listening to the other two after Mark was like following a 2007 Cline Cellars Old Vines Zinfandel with a glass of lukewarm soda water—or following peaches with grits. Yuk!

Friday was a big day for the VMST swimmers. After their first night on the town and despite their initial Southern fried breakfast, no fewer than twelve team members earned 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place medals in a variety of events. Betsy followed up her Thursday victory with a 3rd place finish in the 50-yard breaststroke, while Ida anchored the mixed 200-yard freestyle medley relay team to a 2nd place finish. Joining Ida on the team were Barbara Zeremski, Harry Sober, and the Flying Scot, Sandy Galletly. Earlier, Barbara came in third in the 200-yard backstroke, just behind 1st place winner, Laura Walker, who swam a nearly perfect race.

Many of you will remember that Laura is a founding member of VMST’s infamous “traveling suit” society that was formed several years ago. Having done much research into the “why’s” and “why not’s” of sharing swimsuits among VMST teammates (you don’t want to know all that I found out), I was not surprised to learn that Laura was still winning with the (almost threadbare by now, I would think) traveling suit. Alas, many VMSTers will shed tears now that FINA and USMS have outlawed the suit and its peers from further

championship competitions. (Will there be a burial for the “traveling suit,” and how many VMST members will be in mourning?)

In a younger age bracket of the 200-yard backstroke, Kate Hibbard, swimming in her first USMS national championships, had a perfect 1st place debut. Proving that she has a future with her fellow VMST “trencherwomen” (making up words is one of the great perks of authorship!), Kate was spotted in the Hospitality Room eating cake (!) during the meet. (If I were her beverage manager—as I am for Beth—I would have recommended a glass of 2009 Foris Muscat Frizzante with the cake.) Kate proved not to be a one-time wonder, since on Saturday she took 2nd in the 200-yard IM.

Chris Stevenson, top dog in the VMST swimming kennel, had a marvelous meet (as always), and it started on Friday. After finishing 2nd in the 400-yard individual medley (IM)—it took a new national record to beat him—Chris set the first of his three national records, this one in the 200-yard backstroke. On the weekend, Chris would follow up with national records in both the 50- and 100-yard backstroke events, as well as a 3rd place finish in the 200 IM. As landlubbers used to say in Georgia, he was “gone with the wind.”

Another member of VMST’s improving men’s team, Billy Gaines, impressively took 2nd place in the 200-yard freestyle on Friday. It followed a similar 2nd place performance by Beth Schreiner in the women’s 200 freestyle (topped only by a national record-setting swim by Suzanne Dills.) Two more 2nd place finishes (in the 50-yard breaststroke) were turned in by Marianna Berkley and Lisa Bennett. Some of Lisa’s disappointment was mollified by the fact that her 2nd place finishing time still broke the existing record.

A good number of the VMST team stayed at the Georgia Tech Hotel & Conference Center one block off (you guessed it) West Peachtree Street. I wish we would have. Our Marriott Renaissance Hotel (on West Peachtree, of course, only one block west of Peachtree Street NE!) was substandard, to be kind—sort of like leftover grits. Anyway, several of the VMST ladies from the Tidewater area (you know who you are) twice frequented a local Italian restaurant. I am told that no one can remember what she ate, but each of the ladies remembers the exact wording on the shirts worn by the waiters: “Heaven is where the police

are British, the cooks are Italian, the mechanics are German, the lovers are French, and all is organized by the Swiss. Hell is where the chefs are British, the mechanics are French, the lovers are Swiss, the police are Germans, and all is organized by the Italians.” (In our hotel, the managers were Somali pirates, the room attendants were Taliban rejects, the cashiers were Greek, the restaurant staff was trained by Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe, and it was all organized by Haitians.)

Saturday was a LONG day!! In addition to the fourteen events and a scheduled break, several computer and timing glitches in the “even” competition pool—the other pool was named “odd,” oddly enough—curtailed all swimming for at least another half hour. Had the meet organizers known what I know, they would have had Dorothy Kaufman, sweet mother of VMST swimmer Karen Kaufman, conduct the meet manually. This lady, one of VMST’s most loyal fans and owner of a personality as sweet as (Georgia) peach cobbler, is the most efficient statistician this side of Ripley. At every meet I’ve seen Dorothy, she has more “inside dope” on what’s going on (with figures to back it up) than did my former employer—if you don’t know, I can’t tell. (And Betsy thought she was the only math specialist in VMST.) With Dorothy handling the “even” pool and the computers handling the “odd” pool, we all could sit down with our grits at least an hour earlier that evening.

With the many swimmers participating Saturday, the numerous delays, and several swim “overs,” the deck area around the two pools was chaotic and frenzied, not unlike feeding time at the magnificent Georgia Aquarium. Over the din, I thought of Yogi Berra’s famous observation at a similar venue: “It was as loud as I’d ever seen it.” One more comment about the swimming area: Karen, Beth, and several others complained authoritatively about the elusive bulkheads at the pool ends. Per these experts, the bulkheads seemed closer than they were, thus forcing swimmers to make a late, extra lunge to touch. (I once had similar problems above water each time I tried to steal second base.)

Two VMST mixed teams fared well in the 200-yard medley relay event. Betsy, Warren Brundage, Harry, and Beth took 2nd place, followed in the same heat by the 3rd place winners Judy Martin, Susan Marens, Ken Novell, and Sandy. In the women’s 100-yard breaststroke event, three of

our ladies had 2nd place finishes: Betsy, Marianna, and Lisa. For the second time in the meet, Lisa broke the national record—her own!—but failed to win, this time by the unbelievably miniscule margin of .01 second! (Next time, Lisa, trim your fingernails after the meet.)

Aging like fine wine in my cellar, Cabernet-loving Marianna Berkley started a string of victories for VMST on Saturday with a win in the 200 IM. (When I’m 87, I hope I can spell “IM.”) Swimming with grit but ultimately succumbing to younger swimmers squashed into those “illegal” suits, both Beth and Barbara finished 2nd in their respective age groups of the 100-yard freestyle. (They both would have been winners had USMS made them 125-yard races.) Barbara won the 50-yard backstroke, with Laura coming in a close 2nd. Many of the VMST *grande dames* topped off their day’s achievements with outstanding performances in the 200-yard freestyle relays. First, the more senior (meaning “experienced”) team of Laura, Jeanne Meredith, Susan, and Marianna took 3rd in their age group. That performance obviously inspired their “younger” relay team in the next heat. Betsy, Ida, Beth, and Barbara—who publicly stated their record-setting intentions way before the meet—lived up to their billing, showed true grit (by avoiding grits that morning), made good on their boast, and broke a national record that had stood since 1995.

Sunday was the meet’s final deal, but the VMST swimmers still had several aces up their sleeves. The medley events in the morning showcased a medley of winning performances by the northern southerners from just below the Mason-Dixon line. First, the team of Laura, Marianna, Susan, and Jeanne captured 3rd place in their age group of the 200-yard medley relay. Then, Judy Martin, Betsy, Ida, and Barbara easily won their age group in the same event. All of this clearly motivated the men. Taking 1st place in their age group was the team of Sandy, Warner, Harry, and Ken (each a viral 67-year-old sporting those sexy black and purple swim caps.) This is the first time in memory that a VMST men’s relay team had won a national championship. Well done, gentlemen (and ladies)! The 100-yard IM followed, and success for the black and purple continued. Once again, Marianna took home a 1st place medal in the

See *Schreiner* on page 10.

Schreiner continued from page 9.

event. Lisa followed with a 2nd place finish in her age group.

The afternoon began with the 100-yard backstroke, in which Barbara scored a 3rd place finish. It was then time for the pure sprinters to show their stuff in the 50-yard freestyle, and three VMSTers didn't let the team down. Jeanne opened with a victory in her age group. Next, Barbara took 2nd in her age group. Beth followed with an easy victory, coming close to her national record of 30.42 set three years ago and thereby living up to her very appropriate nickname of "Grandma Evinrude." The final event of the meet was the 200-yard breaststroke. Susan Marens earned another medal with a 3rd place finish, while Marianna completed her outstanding meet with yet another 1st place finish. (I twice played against baseball Hall of Fame pitcher Satchel Paige. Had he witnessed Marianna during this meet, I can hear him ask her, or her teammate Jeanne: "How old would you be if you didn't know how old you was?")

If you think some of the above was exaggeration or hyperbole, you know my writing style, but you must also account for facts. VMST swimmers broke six national records during the championships and garnered fifteen 1st place finishes. Although math teacher Betsy is quick to point out that "there's a difference between math and arithmetic" each time she fails to give the correct change to someone buying a VMST shirt, even I can calculate winning numbers. (In a full disclosure statement, yours truly must admit it took him two tries to get proper change for a \$20 bill from Betsy's stash of bills. I don't know what Betsy's excuse is, but I think global warming has dulled my arithmetic skills.) It was not a surprise that VMST finished first in their team division, beating out some traditional powerhouses like The Olympic Club and Walnut Creek Masters. They made it look easy. If I could speak Southern, I'd say that VMST put an old-fashioned, Southern fried whuppin' on their competitors."

Another old friend of VMST...



Harry DeLong was at the meet coaching his Raleigh swimmers, part of the NC team. Dee was also in town, but didn't swim.



Chaos during the relays – lots of people behind the blocks waiting for the next heat. Swimmers who have finished stay in the water.

Push-Off continued from page 5.

creatures. A streamlined push-off is as close as swimmers ever get to fish-like form. This explains why swimmers routinely travel faster during their push-offs than they do when swimming all-out at the surface.

But a push-off only delivers speed if executed properly. And, as with any exacting skill, learning a proper push-off takes time and concentrated effort. To fine tune a less-than-perfect push-off, a swimmer should work at mastering the following push-off fundamentals.

1. To avoid the water's surface tension and any swimmer-induced turbulence, a swimmer should push off no less than 12 to 24 inches below the waterline. Swimmers who require greater depth to take full advantage of dolphin kicking should angle their push-offs slightly downward.

2. When a push-off emanates from a flip turn, the swimmer's feet should be planted on the wall 12 to 15 inches below the surface. Planting the feet too far down on the wall will usually result in a push-off that is improperly angled upward. For butterfly and breaststroke push-offs, the feet should be planted 18 to 20 inches below the surface. Planting the feet too high or too low can interfere with turn mechanics and diminish the effectiveness of the push-off.

3. Regardless of which stroke propels the swimmer to the wall, the push-off needs to be explosive. The swimmer's feet should be on and off the wall in 0.3 seconds or less. This leaves little time for making adjustments – the incoming turn must precisely align the body in preparation for the push-off.

4. The angle of flexion at the knees, just prior to pushing off, should be somewhere between 90 and 120 degrees. A smaller angle indicates that the swimmer is too close to the wall and in a weakened position for pushing with the legs. It also means that the swimmer wasted time and energy swimming farther than necessary into the wall. If the angle at the knees is greater than 120 degrees, the legs cannot produce a maximum pushing force.

5. When the legs have been fully extended and the swimmer is leaving the wall, the body should be as straight as an arrow. The head should be in line with the body and the back should be as flat as possible. This enables the power of the push to travel in a straight line through the swimmer's rigid form. If the swimmer arches the back while the legs are still pushing against the wall, the arching motion acts like a shock absorber, preventing some of the pushing force from being transferred into forward speed.

6. Once the push is complete and the swimmer's feet have left the wall, water resistance begins to cause rapid deceleration. Within one second of leaving the wall, the glide generated by even the most dynamic push-off will slow to sub-swimming speed. To capitalize on push-off momentum, the swimmer must begin some form of propulsion before this occurs.

Because the push-off takes place underwater, without fanfare, it does not have the lure of other racing skills, such as the high-profile start. But each race can only have one start – after that, the push-off is the mechanism by which swimmers launch themselves into each successive length of swimming. And although it may not be swimming's most glamorous skill, a top-notch push-off is a valuable asset. Swimmers who understand this and master the push-off will have a decided advantage over competitors who are less push-off proficient.

More from Atlanta...

Alison Moore and Debbie Jaeger



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Alison Meehan with the banner.



Alvin gets around – shown here with Rowdy Gaines. Rob Butcher is in the background.

