

The Wet Gazette



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Lessons from My 10-Year Old Daughter

by Rich Williams

Last summer I got to live a dad's "dream come true" when I competed in a team triathlon with my wife and 10-year-old daughter. My daughter handled the swimming duties, my wife took over on the bike, and I brought the team home on the run. This was my daughter's first open water race, and she was the youngest person in the field by several years. The overwhelming majority of participants were adults. She and I practiced several times in the Chesapeake Bay to understand the differences between open water and pool swimming. She could not have been more excited for the race! My mother and my sister even came to cheer for us, and photos galore now adorn my office.

The swimming portion of the race began in the water (as opposed to a running start from the beach). I gave her some last-minute instructions primarily geared toward keeping her safe as she navigated the course through a herd of much larger bodies. She turned around as she entered the water, waved to the family, and made a shivering gesture to playfully convey a message about the water temperature. When she reached the starting line, my mom turned to me and said, "I've lost her, which one is she?" As I pointed my mom's gaze in the correct direction, I said, "she is the only one who is smiling." My daughter, the smallest and youngest person in the field by far, was having the time of her life. She wasn't burdened by the anxiety that you could see on every other competitor's face. She just wanted to race!

My daughter competed admirably that day. She was the second person out of the water in her wave of competitors and passed the first-place finisher on the transition to the bike. My wife and I were able to hang on the best we could, and we finished in third place in the team competition. My daughter was the star of the show.

A few months later, she competed in her final championship swim meet in the 10 & under division. She came

into the meet with high hopes, knowing that this would be her last chance to hit certain motivational time standards before she aged-up. Her program for the meet was brutal, trials and finals in 6 events, plus finals in the 500 Free and 200 IM, plus two relays, all over a three-day period. She had a spectacular meet, but I was a little worried about her going into finals on day 3. Surely, she would run out of gas at some point. After all, she was about to complete her 14th, 15th and 16th swims of the weekend on a Sunday evening when most kids were winding down and getting ready for school the next day. I could not have been more wrong. On her 15th event, the 100 IM, she dropped 3 seconds from her morning time, which was already a 2 second drop from her previous best and won the event. She out-touched a competitor that she had never beaten before. It was a truly shocking moment.

After the race, she was already excited about her next and last event, the 100 Free. She told me, "I don't care how fast I have to swim; I am going to win." I wasn't sure how to respond. She had already dropped 3 seconds from her best time in her morning swim, and the girl who was seated first was another 3 seconds faster. I did not want to deflate her aspirations, but I really didn't think she could even make the race close. I just told her I was proud of her and to swim her best.

That last race was truly spectacular. Both girls swam incredibly fast and dropped time from the morning. My daughter ended up dropping another 4 seconds – a total of 7 on the day in that event. The drop wasn't enough to give her the gold medal that she wanted, but she could not have been happier with the race. Overall, it was the best session of her short career.

Why am I telling you these stories? I will admit that I shamelessly brag about my child whenever an opportunity arises. However, in this case, I am motivated by the desire to share the lessons that she taught me. She allowed me to see our sport from a view that I hadn't seen in decades. There is going to come a time when this unwanted hiatus from swimming ends. We will all go back to the pool with renewed vigor for training and a much greater appreciation for the fitness, camaraderie, and fun

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General Information

LMSC for Virginia Website:

www.vaswim.org

USMS Website: www.usms.org

Nearby LMSCs

North Carolina: www.ncmasters.org

Maryland:

www.teamunify.com

Potomac Valley: www.PVMasters.org

Nearby Zones

Colonies Zone:

www.ColoniesZone.org

Dixie Zone:

www.DixieZone.org

Online Meet Registrations:

www.clubassistant.com

LMSC Officers

Chair: Kirk Clear

Vice-Chair: Denise Letendre

Secretary: Alice Phillips

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Membership Coordinator:

Jeff Bush

Coaches: Rich Williams

Fitness: Vacant

Long Distance: Kate Stephensen

Newsletter: Heather and Chris

Stevenson

Officials: Charlie Cockrell

Records & Top Ten: Chris

Stevenson

Review: Heather Stevenson

Safety: Jim Miller

Sanctions: Kyle Ahlgren

Webmaster: Chris Stevenson

Upcoming Swim Meets, Events and Clinics

Date	Meet	Location	Registration Deadline
Apr. 23-26, 2020	USMS Spring Nationals (SCY)	San Antonio, TX	CANCELLED
May 8-9, 2020	SwimRVA Mother's Day Celebration and Long Course Invitational (LCM)	Richmond, VA	CANCELLED
May 24, 2020	Jim McDonnel Lake Swims (Open Water)	Reston, VA	CANCELLED
Aug. 12-16, 2020	USMS Summer Nationals (LCM)	Richmond, VA	tbd
Aug. 22-27, 2020	USMS High Performance Camp	Greenboro, NC	tbd
Sept. 19, 2020	USMS Coach Certification Levels 1 and 2 (Clinic)	Washington, DC	tbd
Sept. 19, 2020	USMS Coach Certification Level 3 (Clinic)	Washington, DC	tbd
Sept. 19-20, 2020	USMS Clinic Course for Coaches (Clinic)	Washington, DC	tbd

My Daughter (cont'd from page 1)

that Masters Swimming offers. When that time comes, what will our limitations be, and who will set them? How long will our joy for swimming last? Will we find the courage to set audacious goals and to train with complete commitment knowing that, in the end, we may not achieve them?

If you take this time to try to develop a silver lining, when swimming resumes, maybe you can find your inner 10-year-old who is unfazed by new challenges. Maybe you can be the swimmer who is identifiable because you have the biggest smile on deck. And maybe, just maybe, you can be the person that doesn't care how fast they need to swim, or how hard they have to work, in pursuit of a dream.

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The Longest Journey Begins with a Single Step

By Betsy Durrant*

In the title of this article, I have paraphrased a Chinese proverb. I keep this and “Today is the First Day of the Rest of your Life” in mind as I struggle to return to swim workouts and regain some modest success in competing.

First, let me introduce myself. I know many of our Virginia swimmers, but many younger swimmers have joined the fun while I have been away from regular swimming for several years. I began Masters Swimming while living in North Carolina in 1973. I went to my first nationals in 1975 and I moved to Virginia Beach in 1976. I have been very dedicated to training and going to meets and have been involved in the administration of our sport both locally and nationally. I love what Masters Swimming has done for me.

My first and current problem is a bad back. I think I will walk with a cane the rest of my life, which is okay; it could be worse, and it has been worse. An MRI of my back revealed a growth in my uterus. I was diagnosed with stage 4 cancer of the uterus at the end of December 2017. I had chemotherapy and radiation from January through June of 2018. At the end of the summer of 2018, the doctor tried several less potent chemotherapies, looking for a maintenance routine I could tolerate. I couldn't tolerate any and ended up in the hospital after trying each new treatment. In December of 2018, the doctor decided since I had no active cancer, we should stop any treatment and let my body heal. We did a scan in the summer of 2019 and everything looked good. I continued to regain strength and see the oncologist every three months to make sure I am still clear. So far so good. I had a knee replacement in August. When I was cleared for swimming again, I begin the long journey to fitness.

I had done a little swimming here and there, but nothing consistent. As many of you know, getting back in the routine is hard after two years. The fact that I am 78 makes it even more challenging. I went back to coached workouts, but had some trouble swimming with others. I love to compete,

which is good up to a point. But I am in no shape to swim fast or even medium speed yet. I have decided I need to swim slowly and develop a good aerobic base, then I can work on improving intervals and pacing. Right now, I am going to practice, but swimming alone in a lap lane. I hope I will be able to rejoin the group before too long.

My goal is to swim in nationals in Richmond in August. I don't expect to place in anything, but I want to finish my events with a feeling of accomplishment and the knowledge that I can get better. As I write this, however, I am a little discouraged. I don't drive anymore so I am dependent on others to get to the pool. I have a ride two mornings, but that is not enough. I have to figure out how to get to a pool 4 days a week. Also, I've had various minor problems that have kept me from swimming. The latest is pain around the left side of my ribs. All I did was reach down while sitting and twist a little to reach something. Wow, pain shot through the rib cage. I had x-rays and there is no fracture. I just have to let it heal.

Sometimes I think I should take a load off my mind and face the fact that I can't do this. But the cliché “this is the first day of the rest of your life” makes me stop and think. My conclusion is that I don't want to spend the rest of my life without swimming. The sport has brought me a lot of joy over the years. I plan to continue my journey.



*Editor's Note: Betsy wrote this in February before COVID-19 shut down swimming. We expect to see her back in the water once we can all swim again!

Fun Dryland Workout

There is no reason to get out of shape while we wait for pools to reopen and for swimming to start up again. In the interim, here is a fun dryland workout option. You can create a workout routine by doing the exercises that spell your name (e.g., Craig: 30 squats, 15 mountain climbers, 50 jumping jacks, 30 jumping jacks, and 20 seconds of arm circles) or if you are truly a glutton for punishment, do them in ABC order, A through Z.

A	50 Jumping Jacks	N	40 Jumping Jacks
B	20 Crunches	O	25 Burpees
C	30 Squats	P	15 Arm Circles
D	15 Pushups	Q	30 Crunches
E	30 Seconds Plank	R	15 Mountain Climbers
F	10 Burpees	S	30 Burpees
G	20 Seconds Arm Circles	T	15 Squats
H	20 Squats	U	30 Mountain Climbers
I	30 Jumping Jacks	V	Plank: as long as you can go
J	15 Crunches	W	20 Burpees
K	10 Pushups	X	60 Jumping Jacks
L	1 Minute Plank	Y	10 Crunches
M	20 Mountain Climbers	Z	20 Pushups

The Northern Neck Stripers are sending our heartfelt gratitude to the Virginia Masters Swim Team community for those who are on the front lines protecting, working, and serving during this war against the COVID-19 pandemic.

To all the health care workers, firefighters, EMS, law enforcement, military, grocery, pharmacists, volunteers, and other workers who continue to work at essential places of business, we thank you. Your sacrifice does not go unnoticed.

Cheers to our heroes that will bring us through! Help our heroes help us all by staying home.

- Coach Craig

Missing Swimming

If you haven't seen it already, you might want to read the New York Times article, "What I Miss Most Is Swimming," published on April 10th. Here is a link:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/10/opinion/sunday/swimming-covid.html?searchResultPosition=1>