



## Quarantine Tides

By Alice Phillips

**One day last week**, I shut my dining room laptop, got in my car, and started driving. I didn't know why. I didn't know where. I had no destination or reason, no impulse except to go "somewhere else". I drove around for an hour. Perhaps I wanted to see people in the flesh. Then again, we aren't supposed to see people. Well, we can see them, but we can't see their mouths anymore and we only let them see half of our faces. We can be near them, but only "over there" at least six feet away.

Suffice it to say, I was not having a good mental health day. I was feeling the loneliness of quarantine and I was searching. Mental Health America promotes May as National Mental Health Month – May 2020 certainly presents some trials that no one could have prepared for.

SARS-CoV2 is here to teach us some things, but I'm not much in the mood to listen. I still have some anger that I can't swim. Normally, swimming is my anchor. I organize my week around when I am swimming. I also practice yoga regularly and enjoy hiking, but for me, swimming is a tonic like no other exercise. I do have moments of quarantine acceptance; my logical mind knows that I can't do anything about this. It's time to make lemonade, look on the bright side, find the silver linings. But some mornings

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## Fish Out of Water: The First Club Tribe Masters Dryland Meet

By Dan Earle

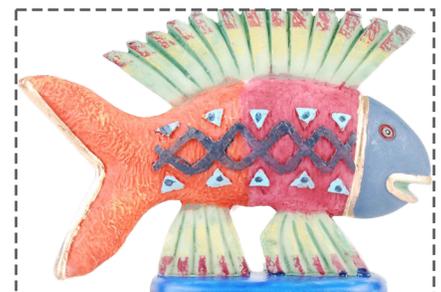
**One member of Club Tribe** posted on the Team Facebook page Monday morning, "I was asked...What did you do over the weekend?" He stated he had trouble finding an answer. The easy answer would have been, "I competed in the First Club Tribe Dryland Meet." The real answer is a lot more detailed and a lot more fun.

On the weekend of April 17-20, 2020, Club Tribe competed against themselves in a Team dryland competition. The idea was sparked by an article posted on USMS.org (<https://www.usms.org/fitness-and-training/articles-and-videos/articles/milford-athletic-club-creates-fun-competition-to-maintain-community>) about a "meet" that the Milford Athletic Club held to replace the cancelled Michigan LMSC state meet. It took Club Tribe Head Coach Rich Williams about 3 seconds to say, "We're doing this," when he heard about the meet.

The Team (for the purpose of clarity, "the Team" refers to Club Tribe, while "the team" or "the teams" refers to the smaller groups created to compete in this meet) began planning almost immediately. The first order of business was setting the rules. The Team followed the basic rules of the Milford Athletic Club competition. Activities, which included workouts, multi-sport

events, social engagement, team spirit and social networking, were assigned point values. The final point values were as follows:

- Run – 15 points
- 30 minute walk – 7 points
- 45 minutes of cardio and/or strength training- 15 points
- 15 mile bike – 15 points
- 5000 meter row – 15 points
- 1200 yard open water swim – 15 points
- Yoga for 30 minutes – 10 points
- Call any Club Tribe teammate one-on-one for >10 mins – 5 points (both participants score)
- Post picture on Club Tribe Facebook of any competition-related Club Tribe activity – 4 points
- Post >1 min video on Facebook of choreographed Club Tribe activity (be creative) – 8 points
- Refrain from alcohol for the entire day (Friday and/or Saturday only) – 10 points (each day)



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## Upcoming Events

### Jim McDonnell Lake Swims

May 24, 2020: Reston, VA  
(1-mi, 2-mi Open Water Swims)  
**CANCELLED**

### USMS Summer Nationals

August 12-16, 2020: Richmond, VA  
(LCM Pool)

### USMS High Performance Camp

August 22-27, 2020: Greensboro, NC  
(Clinic)

### Maryland Swim for Life

September 19, 2020: Chesterown, MD  
(Multiple Open Water Distances)

## General Information

LMSC for Virginia Website: [www.vaswim.org](http://www.vaswim.org)

USMS Website: [www.usms.org](http://www.usms.org)

Nearby LMSCs

North Carolina: [www.ncmasters.org](http://www.ncmasters.org)  
Maryland: [www.teamunify.com](http://www.teamunify.com)  
Potomac Valley: [www.PVMasters.org](http://www.PVMasters.org)

Nearby Zones

Colonies Zone: [www.ColoniesZone.org](http://www.ColoniesZone.org)  
Dixie Zone: [www.DixieZone.org](http://www.DixieZone.org)

Online Meet Registrations: [www.clubassistant.com](http://www.clubassistant.com)

## LMSC Officers

Chair: Kirk Clear  
Vice-Chair: Denise Letendre  
Secretary: Alice Phillips  
Treasurer: Becca Latimer  
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

## USMS COVID-19 Information

USMS has a number of resources for Masters swimmers and coaches on its website: [www.usms.org/about-usms/covid19-information](http://www.usms.org/about-usms/covid19-information)

For members, these resources include informative articles about motivation away from swimming, a variety for dryland workouts (including weekly workouts) and alternative training suggestions.

For coaches, USMS has a restart guide for clubs, help for small businesses, information about facility maintenance, and resources for staying in shape and staying in touch with swimmers.

## Club Tribe (cont'd from page 1)

- Run/Bike/Run duathlon (5K, 12Mi, 5K) – 45 points
- Run/Swim(open water)/Run duathlon – (5K, 1000 yards, 5K) – 45 points
- Swim (open water)/Bike duathlon – (1000 Yards, 26 miles) – 45 points
- Open water triathlon (1000 yards/12 miles/5K) – 45 points
- For those who do not run because of injury, you can substitute a 5K row for the run component of any of the duathlons/triathlons

Each competitor was limited to five scoring opportunities per day. With the exception of calling a teammate, posting a picture or video on the Facebook page and refraining from alcohol, the activities could be repeated in a single day for scoring opportunities. So, a 10K run would be two scoring opportunities, each worth 15 points, for a total of 30 points. A competitor who completed a 10K run would still have three scoring opportunities for the day.

The second task was creating teams. To start, several members of the Team were contacted and asked to be “Captains” of a team. Once the captains were selected, the entire Team was sent an invitation to participate. Participation was voluntary. Initially, more than 40 Team members signed up to compete. Ultimately, 51 competitors participated on 9 teams of 5-6 people each. Because the number of competitors on each team was not even, the captains decided that the average points per team member would be used in the final standings. Each competitor was asked to report to their captain at the end of each day and the captains entered point totals into a Google spreadsheet that tabulated the results on a daily basis, including the totals and averages for the day and the cumulative totals and averages for the weekend.

The “meet” began the morning of Friday, April 17, 2020. Except it didn’t. The first sign that this competition was going to be more than just a friendly way to get in a little exercise came late Thursday night when a competitor from Australia reported his first 45 points for an open water triathlon

completed (locally) Friday morning, before several competitors went to bed on the east coast Thursday night. From that point, it was game on.

Each competitor participated in their own way. Some had plenty of time and equipment to accumulate points. Some had to balance exercise with work from home, home schooling, childcare, or even essential jobs. Some were more technologically savvy than others. Some were more sane than others. After the first day of the competition, most participants had come to one or more of the following conclusions: 1. THIS IS AWESOME! 2. I miss my team. 3. I miss competing. 4. I can do more. The high point earner for Day 1 scored 165 points, by completing 3 Run/Bike/Run duathlons (45 points each), one 5000 meter row (15 points) and 45 minutes of cardio/strength (15 points). Twelve competitors scored more than 75 points on Day 1.

By Day 2, the competitors seemed to find their groove and participation increased. Teams began using Zoom to virtually train together. The Team Facebook page exploded with pictures, videos and updates. Teammates called each other, started group texts and exercised with family members. Swimmers found open water, and got in despite the cold. Some participants reported running for the first time in years. Others got on a bike for the first time in decades. It was as if a strong breeze had blown the fog of stay at home orders and uncertainty away and cleared the air for some healthy fun and competition. Seven of the 9 teams scored more points on Day 2 than they had on Day 1. Twenty-one competitors scored more than 75 points on Day Two.

By Day 3, some competitors were spent, while others found yet another gear. At the beginning of Day 3, one team had a substantial lead, but five teams were in the running for second place. The competitive juices many Masters swimmers feel while standing behind the blocks, or on the shores of an open

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## Club Tribe (cont'd from page 2)

water swim, were flowing. Despite two exhausting days, 18 competitors scored 75 or more points on Day 3.

In the end, the winning team averaged 96.4 points per competitor for each day of the competition. Over the weekend, seven competitors scored 300 or more points, with the high point earner scoring 400 points. The competitors averaged 206 points for the weekend, with a median score of 192. To put this in perspective, and as an example, to score 195 points over three days, a competitor would have to: a. Complete 45 minutes of strength/ cardio (15); b. Run/walk 5K (15); c. Do 30 minutes of yoga (10); d. Complete a 15 mile bike ride (15); and e. Refrain from alcohol for the day (10), for all three days of the weekend.

As is typically the case with Masters competitions, the Team finished the weekend with a Team party. More than 50 participants joined in a Zoom call to discuss the weekend, announce the winners, and be together. Enjoying a drink during this call was highly encouraged. The Zoom call started with

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## Quarantine (cont'd from page 1)

when I wake up and suddenly remember, “oh yeah...not swimming”, I want to drown those platitudes.

Perhaps the most important thing we can do this month, this week, and this day is something for our mental health. Many of us make choices to care for our physical health regularly, but what are we choosing to steady our minds? I share some ideas below, and most of them I have tried, but I know from the roller coaster I am riding that no one single step will do it. Consider these:

1) Get a hobby, something that you're interested in, purely from an intellectual or cognitive place. Make a date with that hobby at least every week. It's for you, no other purpose.

2) Tend to something living whether that's a pet or plants or someone you know. Having someone or something that needs you is remarkably motivating and rewarding.

3) Journal. You could free write for 5-10 minutes with your coffee. You could record a single sentence in your calendar at the end of each day. You might take a picture or find one online, then store those in an online notebook with the date. You might record your daily exercise, sleep, or food. The point is noticing and keeping track.

4) Establish a sleep-eat-work-rest routine. Structure can be very stabilizing and helpful. I also think it's important to give yourself free reign one or two days a week – no plan, no requirements. This helps me avoid being too rigid about routines.

5) Turn off the media. We can't escape the necessity of screens in our lives now, but we can establish a reasonable allowance for it. Try an evening restriction or total time limit. Maybe check your

formalities and ended up lasting for hours, with participants leaving when they had to, but everyone taking a chance to enjoy being part of a team again.

Every Masters swimmer has their own personal reasons for participating. Some do it for fitness, some for competition, some for fun, some for motivation or coaching, and most for some or all of these reasons, plus many more. With the temporary closing of pools and gyms and restaurants and the cancellation of local, zone and national meets, these opportunities are also closed. For one weekend, Club Tribe was able to get some of this back, to compete, to motivate, to inspire, (to ignore their families), to be a team again, and to enjoy each other's company during and after a challenge. The meet also inspired subsequent events. The Team has started regular Zoom workout groups, exercise classes taught by team members and even more text chains. Additional social engagements are planned. And there is no doubt, in anyone's mind, that if pools remain closed for much longer, the Second Club Tribe Dryland Meet is coming soon and will be even more competitive.

hours per week and decrease by 10%. Too much media rocks the boat and gets us into negative headspace.

6) Reach out to someone every day, especially if you live alone. Chat with a neighbor, call or text a friend, have a family Zoom. Even the most introverted of us needs regular companionship and connection.

7) “Take it in and give it away.” (*A Hearty Life* by Dave Mochel) The idea here is to realize that some amount of human struggle and even suffering is inevitable. We can and must meet these difficulties with compassion, directed both toward ourselves and those around us. We know that others are dealing with challenges even greater than our own. Accept these inevitabilities and gain perspective.

8) Recognize your own resilience. I don't mean to make light of the gravity of our current situation when I say that you've completed difficult practice sets, open water swims, and pool races. You are physically tough. Even more likely, you have managed significant stressors or tragedies in your life – you are making it through this one too. Remember that resilience and allow it to buoy you through a current low.

The day I finished this article I was walking and listening to a TED Radio Hour podcast from Jonny Sun – an author, illustrator, and PhD student at MIT. He says that loneliness is in us always, just under the surface – that it's part of the human condition. Sun contends that generally we are too afraid of it, we try to escape it, and we are upset when it reappears after a time in which we weren't lonely. Perhaps as quarantine begins to lift, or at least get reshaped, we can appreciate these days in which we allowed for loneliness, and trust that the tide will retreat again.