



April-May 2022



## Masters Spotlight: Tess Andres

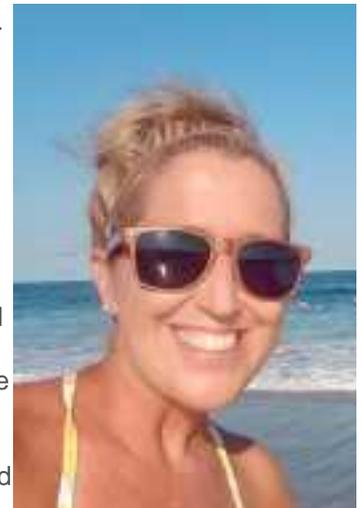
Those of you who haven't met Tess yet are in for a treat. Not only is she a great swimmer, but she is also a wonderful science teacher for middle school boys (ask our son)! Here are her answers to our interview questions . . .

### ***When did you join USMS? Where and how often do you swim?***

So I think my first meet here in VA was in 2012 so that's probably when I joined. I swim 3-5 days a week during the winter and 5-7 days a week during the summer when I'm training for something particular. I swim practices with the Hammerhead group at swim RVA and get in the open water, river mostly, as much as possible. It's almost open water season again!

### ***What is your background as a swimmer and athlete?***

I started swimming when I was 6 years old. My first race that I remember was a 25 backstroke, I finished last. But it was one of those times when everyone claps for the last swimmer, so I liked it. I got a little more serious in high school and became a year round swimmer. I swam division 2 in college for Wingate University in NC. I kept swimming for fun and doing short open water swims after college. When I moved to VA I started coaching and swimming more and more. My current love/obsession is pushing myself to do new longer distances in open water. After doing some master's meets I moved into open water. I did the bridge and back swims each year here in VA, VBLA ocean swims, Chris Greene Lake/John Shrum, NJ open water swims, relayed the Absecon Island swim twice, Low Country Splash several years in a row, some tropical island swims, Swim the Loop, and last year I completed the Swim around Charleston (12.5 miles). I played around with running a marathon this year... I'm definitely a swimmer.



### ***What motivates you to swim?***

My health and swim friends. I love being in the water. It gives me peace of mind. And I love being outside near the water or in it every summer. Swim adventures and training with teammates and friends is fun. Oh, and I love chocolate, baked goods, ice cream all of it so swimming helps with that.

### ***Outside of the pool, what occupies your time?***

I'm a teacher at Seven Hills School in Richmond, VA, so that definitely takes up a lot of my time, especially during the school year. I coach high school swimming at Trinity Episcopal School and coach Masters at SwimRVA. I have an awesome group of friends. I do some running (Shamrock Marathon this year) I like winter running when it's cold, but I'm a swimmer. I enjoy live music, hiking, wine, baking. I love the beach and spending time with family and friends.

### ***Some people might be surprised to know that...***

I don't like white condiments... no ranch, no mayo, no sour cream... yuck.

### ***What's the funniest thing that has happened to you (or that you have seen) at a Master's event?***

I'm always impressed with the older swimmers who have the most competitive attitude. Like the guy at master's nationals in Maryland that would only do backstroke events because he couldn't dive in anymore and didn't want to start off behind anyone.

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## Current and Upcoming Events

### Go The Distance

January 1 - December 31, 2022; any pool

### Pre-Nationals Clinics

June 12, and July 10, 2022 (also TBD date in April or May); Richmond, VA

### John Shrum Memorial Cable Swim at Chris Greene Lake

June 4, 2022; Charlottesville, VA

### Big Kahuna Masters Classic (LCM)

June 18, 2022; Virginia Beach, VA

### USMS Summer (LCM) Nationals

August 3-7, 2022; Richmond, VA

### Lake Moomaw 1-Mile Swim

August 20, 2022; Hot Springs, VA

## Welcome to Open Water Season

by Jay Peluso\*

As the weather changes and lakes and rivers start to warm up it's time to start thinking about open water season. For years I was frustrated by the number of athletes I pulled out of open water swims while working on event safety boats. I heard the same stories over and over again as we shuttled the defeated and upset athlete back to shore:

- "But I can do the distance in the pool."
- "I've never been in open water before but thought I'd be fine, I'm a good athlete."
- "My wetsuit is too tight, I can't breathe."
- "I got kicked (elbowed)(kneed)"

We have tried to educate athletes about preparing for open water, how it differs from pool swimming, and why it's important to know the difference. Here are 7-points to consider before attempting an open water event.

**1. Learn to swim in a pool first.** When we started our first open water program, we thought we'd only offer open water training. Boy was that a mistake. We had a lot of new swimmers turn up and really struggle. We realized quickly that a lot of these folks needed to simply learn to swim, tread water, float on their back, etc... Most could swim in the sense that they could keep from drowning when they jumped off a boat to play around, but distance open water swimming was another thing entirely. Before you attempt an open water swim, be sure you've done at least some pool training with a qualified coach or training partner.

**2. Understand that a 750m or 1500m swim in a 25-SCY pool is very different than a lake, river or ocean.** Often when pulling swimmers from events they are very adamant that they have done the required distance in the pool before they came to the event and they don't know why they are struggling so much. But when we talk about their training, we'd find out that it all had been in a short course pool, where they could stop at the wall, put their feet down, adjust their goggles, take a breath, and then go. In essence, they were swimming 30x25 instead of 750m. If your event is 750m, be sure you are capable of swimming that distance *without stopping* before trying it in open water.

**3. Practice open water skills in the pool.** This includes sighting, swimming in a pack, rounding buoys, drafting, and situational awareness. We offer our Winter Open Water program for just this reason. Now we are fortunate to have the facility we do and a staff that thinks open water safety is important. But these drills can all be practiced in a regular pool during your typical USMS practice.

We take all the lane ropes out of our 50m pool that is 7ft 7in deep all the way around. We put buoys in the water in different configurations each week and run a workout. This goes well beyond just swimming loops around the buoys no stop. We practice changing pace-elevating the heart rate and then calming the pace down to continue swimming. Swimming in packs of three, five or more where we intentionally stay together so swimmers get used to the feeling of getting bumped or grabbed or getting water in their mouths with a

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## 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: <https://www.teamunify.com/Home.jsp?team=msmdlmsc>

Home.jsp?team=msmdlmsc

Potomac Valley: [www.PVMasters.org](http://www.PVMasters.org)

Nearby Zones

Colonies Zone (no website currently)

Southeast Zone: [www.SouthEastZone.org](http://www.SouthEastZone.org)

Online Meet Registrations:

[www.clubassistant.com](http://www.clubassistant.com)

## LMSC Officers

Chair: Caycee Buscaglia

Vice-Chair: Ken Gardner

Secretary: Alice Phillips

Treasurer: Becca Latimer

Membership Coordinator: Chris Stevenson

Coaches: Vacant

Fitness: Vacant

Long Distance: Dave Holland

Newsletter: Heather and Chris Stevenson

Officials: Charlie Cockrell

Records & Top Ten: Chris Stevenson

Review: Heather Stevenson

Safety: Jim Miller

Sanctions: George Sushkoff

Webmaster/Social Media: George Sushkoff

*(Open Water, cont'd from page 2)*

breath. We even do a drill where we fill one goggle up with water – swim a loop, then the other goggle – swim a loop, then BOTH goggles – swim a loop.

The whole idea is to simulate open water situations in a safe environment so that when our swimmers encounter them in real open water they have experienced them, know how to deal with them and they don't panic. Once panic starts, it's very hard to stop and if you are in an open water event with 500 or 1000 people and no place to go, panic can be deadly.

**4. Try on your gear in the pool first – wetsuit, outdoor goggles, cap.** So often we see swimmers wearing their wetsuits for the first time at their event. It is important to practice in the gear you intend to use. Be sure it fits you properly and that you are comfortable in it for the duration you tend to use it. Swimming 100m in a wetsuit you need to wear for 2.4-miles probably won't give you the insight you need into how it will work for you.

You can try all of your gear out in the pool first. Most wetsuit manufacturers advise against using them in the pool too often due to the negative effect of chlorine on the rubber, but if you rinse your suit in the shower with you right after your swim you shouldn't have any issues. This tip is for goggles and caps as well. If your goggles tend to fog up, or if there will be bright sunshine in your face during an event, it's good to know if your equipment will be comfortable, operational, and effective before you get out there.

**5. Get in the open water safely.** Know before you go - understand your venue. Are there currents, tides, underwater obstructions? Check maps, tidal and flow charts, temperature gauges, to be sure you know what you are getting into that day. Your best resources are lifeguards and other swimmers experienced with the venue. Don't be afraid to ask questions. They are more than happy to share their knowledge. Use a tow-buoy, swim with a buddy and/or kayak/SUP support. Know your limits – if you only swim 1000m in a pool workout, don't try a 2.4-mile swim right away. Build up to your goal distance.

**6. Practice what you will encounter on event day.** Is it an open water start or beach start? Will you be in a pack of swimmers, getting bumped and swum over? What if your goggles fill up with water?

We already touched on this in tip #3 – but you should also practice these things in the open water. Too often we see athletes simply get in the open water for a long, straight swim for set amount of time. No change of pace, no change of stroke rate, no sighting work. While there is certainly a place for the long swim session in your open water training, it shouldn't be *the only* training. That 30- or 60-minute swim with no one around you, no stress of a starting horn or buoy to find, is fun and great exercise. It will not, however, prepare you for the chaos of an open water event where your heart rate spikes, or you miss a breath due to chop or turbulence or you can't find a buoy. Put yourself in situations with other swimmers where you can simulate and practice what you will encounter on event day and eliminate that stress so you can focus on swimming.

**7. Be consistent with your training.** Have a coach help you decide how much training you need for your goal event and stick to the plan. Avoid “cramming” – waiting until the last minute to start your swim training. I can't tell you how many athletes we've seen avoid swim training because it's their weakness and they don't enjoy the process. They often are great runners or cyclists or cross fitters and being in the “slow” lane seems odd to them, so they just don't train until it's too late. They try to cram the training into an insufficient training block, sometimes with disastrous results.

Getting away from the black line and out into the sunshine is one of the greatest parts of open water swimming. We always look forward to the warm weather and seeing nature from the water and hope these tips will help you safely give an open water event a try.

*\*Jay Peluso is the Program Coordinator for SwimRVA Hammerheads in Richmond, Virginia. He is a long-time USMS swimmer and triathlete. SwimRVA is the location of USMS Summer Long Course Nationals in August this year.*

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## 2022 Spring National Championship

The 2022 Spring National SCY Championship was held Apr 28 - May 1 in San Antonio, TX. Thirty swimmers from our LMSC participated, representing four teams: Club Tribe brought the largest contingent with 20, but VMST, Tide Swimming, and the Freedom Aquatic Club also had representatives. Club Tribe scored an impressive 667 points to finish 7th in the Local Clubs category.

There was a lot of fast swimming. Seven people set new individual LMSC records, led by Brent Hosten who set five new marks in the 50-54 age group. Record-setting swims were also posted by Fall Willeboordse (3), Barbara Boslego (2), Bonnie Zhang (2), Paul Klepchick, Joshua Kreider, and Susan Williams.

We also had seven new national champions, led by Fall and Brent with three titles apiece. Barbara and Bonnie each took home two titles, while Peter Bruce, Matthew Healey, and Sam Kettlewell-Sites won one event. Club Tribe also fielded three relays who took the national crown.

Congratulations to all who participated!