

The Wet Gazette

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Serving Masters Swimmers in Virginia and West Virginia

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Relay 2022

by Caycee Buscaglia

Denver was the location for the recent USMS Relay 2022. The theme of Relay 2022 was club development with a focus on building relationships with facilities, recruiting and supporting coaches, and providing resources for clubs to grow. This in-person meeting of representatives from around the country featured a series of workshops and discussion topics that provided a wonderful opportunity for learning, motivation, and helping new local volunteers. One of my goals was to connect with many LMSC representatives and pick their brains about what works well for them in their clubs or LMSCs and why. Many shared impacts of COVID on their teams with Florida reporting that COVID was good for Masters swimming programs. USMS data reveals only 30% of masters swimmers are competing; the remaining 70% of our members are fitness swimmers, triathletes, or open water-only swimmers. While many localities in USMS are wide open, others are just now opening back up like Virginia. Most have had events for pool competition and open water. Social engagement was a focus and continued to be stressed as a way to give value back to members. Many people let me know they are excited to visit Richmond in August for Long Course Nationals.

Olympian Nathan Adrian was the keynote speaker - he talked for at least an hour. He shared his recent business venture buying the Ann Curtis Swim School/facility with plans to continue with learn-to-swim programs, as well as, adding a USA club team and a Masters program on-site. He entertained us with his Olympic experiences and the personalities of the Olympians we know so well from the media. He told us his personal struggle with cancer which brought many to tears (myself included). My roommate for the weekend was Arlette Godges, a swimmer and coach from the Pacific LMSC. She gave me insights into clubs and masters programming that I didn't even know existed. California's programming is as varied as their geographical landscape. I walked away from my time in Denver energized and ready for some "normalcy" as we start to hold events. The experience of being around hundreds of members who share the same passion for swimming was invaluable. I look forward to seeing many of you in the upcoming months as various swimming events finally happen!



Current and Upcoming Events

Go The Distance

January 1 - December 31, 2022; any pool

Colonies Zone SCY Championship

April 1-3, 2022; Auburn, MA

North Carolina SCY Championship

April 2-3, 2022; Cary, NC

USMS Spring (SCY) Nationals

April 28 - May 1, 2022; San Antonio, TX

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

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

Southeast Zone: www.SouthEastZone.org

Online Meet Registrations:

www.clubassistant.com

LMSC Officers

Chair: Caycee Buscaglia

Vice-Chair: Ken Gardner

Secretary: Alice Phillips

Treasurer: Becca Latimer

Membership Coordinator: Chris Stevenson

Coaches: Rich Williams

Fitness: Dane Schwartz

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

Pre-Competition Clinics: Workout at the USMS Summer Nationals Pool!

by Alice Phillips

Two years ago, we were all living in COVID lockdown and watching our hopes for a national meet in our state going down the drain. What a thrill to find the meet back on the calendar with hopes high for a safe and enjoyable experience for all.

The LMSC is excited to host three pre-event clinics at SwimRVA in Richmond, all of which are free for members of the LMSC. Each will include a 90-minute coached workout followed by brunch with some social time and a brief presentation on a relevant topic. Swimmers will be able to get a feel for the same water in which they will be competing in August, gain feedback from one or more coaches, and reconnect with other members of the LMSC. Details are still coming together, but the clinics will be held on Sundays: June 12, and July 10, 2022. A third clinic will be scheduled in late April or May - date TBD. Each workout will run from 9:30-11:00 AM. Participants are welcome to attend, one, two or all three clinics. Stay tuned for more in the next newsletter and on the LMSC website.

Call for Volunteers

Our LMSC needs to fill the positions of Coaches, Fitness, and Diversity and Inclusion Chairs. Below is information on these roles. Please volunteer and give back to the community of swimming. We all share a passion for swimming. Let's share the LOVE. Please contact Caycee Buscaglia if you are interested (bb2cp@aol.com).

COACHES CHAIR: The Coaches Chair role will provide support to local clubs, workout groups and coaches through outreach and mentoring. They will identify opportunities to invest LMSC resources facilitating the growth and retention of clubs, workout groups, coaches and members. **RECOMMENDED EXPERIENCE & SKILLS:** USMS Certified Masters Coach; must be currently coaching or have previously coached a masters program (5 years coaching experience preferred); familiarity with the structure of USMS (LMSCs, zones, clubs, work out groups), rules of competition, and USMS insurance; effective communicator with strong organizational skills.

FITNESS CHAIR: The purpose of this position is to develop, collect, and disseminate information to members about fitness, swimming technique and wellness. **RECOMMENDED EXPERIENCE & SKILLS:** Experience with event planning and event coordination; knowledge of fitness, nutrition and training; passion for both fitness and swimming; strong interpersonal and networking skills; ability to network with other area fitness professionals; ability to write and/or edit fitness articles that relate to swimmer health and wellness.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION CHAIR: This position helps promote Masters Swimming as an activity open to all adults. The position will include working with underserved populations and swimmers that may not have traditionally participated in Masters Swimming. These populations include but are not limited to: people with disabilities, people of color and underrepresented ethnic and religious groups, people whose primary language is not English, people identifying as LGBTQ+, young adults (18-25 years), people of all ages new to the sport of swimming. **RECOMMENDED EXPERIENCE & SKILLS:** Strong communication and leadership skills; basic understanding of diversity, equity & inclusion principals.

IM - 5 Tips To Improve Your Racing

by Andrew Sheaff*

Practice is where every swimmer improves their skills and improves their fitness. Improved skills and fitness should result in faster racing, but that's not always the case. To swim faster, you have to execute your races effectively, and this is a distinct skill that is often overlooked when preparing for competition. To help you improve this skill, I'm going to provide you with specific ideas to help you improve your racing.

As with all of these tips, I'm going to focus on the critical areas of race management, and then describe how each of those areas is relevant to each particular stroke. Today, we're going to explore some key ideas for how to effectively race breaststroke events. While these ideas can be immediately implemented in your next meet, you have to PRACTICE these tips in order to be most effectively at executing these skills in competition. You want these strategies to be habits, and that's only going to happen with practice. Let's check them out.

1. Control the walls. The IM involves a lot of transitions. There are some swimmers that are skilled at all 4 strokes yet struggled with the IM because they fail to transition well. A major aspect of transitioning well is producing great turns. Many swimmers tend to passively approach their turns, and this leads to a lackluster start to the next segment of the IM. Exactly what you don't want.

Focus on finishing each stroke really well, and carry that speed through the wall so that you can start the next stroke in the best position possible. See each turn as an opportunity to gain an edge on your competition as they likely won't be attacking the walls with the same focus. Get into the turn fast, and get out of the turn fast. That focus will help you start each stroke from a place of strength.

2. Build then blast. Building upon the first tip, with each stroke, you want to make sure that you lock in your skills from the first stroke. A common mistake is when swimmers get invigorated or excited by a change to a new stroke. They start off with a really high stroke rate, aggressively attacking the next segment. Unfortunately, this can result in wasting a lot of energy without yielding much speed.

In contrast, be patient when transitioning to a new stroke. Focusing on correctly establishing your skills correctly, and once you have, start turning up the pressure. Think about building the beginning stages, and once you're really moving put the pressure on with a full effort.

3. Cheat your weak strokes. In any IM race, most swimmers will have one, if not two weak strokes. While you should aim to improve your weak strokes in practice, you'll need a different strategy in competition. I suggest you 'cheat'! What I mean by that is to do everything you can to have to 'swim' your weak stroke as little as possible. If it's butterfly, backstroke, or freestyle, extend the underwater dolphin kicks so you'll have to swim less of those strokes. If it's breaststroke, really extend your pullouts. This is a great way to improve the weak legs of your IM without having to improve in those specific strokes. Take advantage of the opportunity.

4. Dominate your strong strokes. If you have a strong leg in the IM, it can be tempting to control your effort knowing that you can still be successful without a full effort. The thought is that you can use your full effort on your weaker strokes where you're less likely to be successful. This is a mistake. Rarely do you get back from your weak stroke what you give up during your strong stroke.

(continued on page 4)

(continued from page 3)

Play to our strengths and attempt to make a huge move during the strongest part of your race. It's an advantage you won't see again, and you'd be wise to use it. If you have a stroke that is a difference maker, use that stroke to separate yourself from your competitors or to make up some lost ground, depending on the situation.

5. Have a plan. There are a lot of different ways to swim each race, and many of them can work. It's important to know what's going to work best for you. While I can't necessarily predict what your best strategy will be, I'll provide you with some options. Regardless, I know that the plan that won't work is the 'see what happens' plan. Unfortunately, this a plan that a lot of swimmers use, even really fast swimmers.

Swim your race rather than someone else's. Know what race strategy is going to be most effective for you, and stick with it. Not sure how to approach your race? Here are some strategies to play with, as well as the distances that these strategies tend to work well with. Remember, to experiment in practice, and once you find a strategy that's comfortable, make it a habit. Regardless of your plan, remember to integrate the other tips into your race strategy.

- 100 IM- Sprint! It's one lap of each stroke. Just GO! You don't have time to pace yourself, and by switching strokes every 25, it will be easier to sustain your speed. The one caveat is that you need to make sure that you begin each lap swimming that particular stroke with great skills. That may require a touch of patience.
- 400 IM- Think negative split. However, you want to think about negative splitting each STROKE. The 2nd 50 of each stroke should be the focus. Try to finish each stroke really well, and you'll build momentum across the whole race, culminating in a performance you'll be proud of.
- 200 IM- I'm putting this event last because the approach is a combination of the prior two. However, it's up to you as to how that combination is constructed. If you're able to sustain it, you can try more of a sprint-based approach, with a touch of negative split concept. If you're more on the endurance side, considering focusing more on even-splitting each stroke, aiming to be really good the second half of each 50.

Regardless of the distance you are racing, you'll need to pay attention to where your strong strokes are and be sure to take full advantage of the opportunity those strokes present. While this may change your strategy slightly, it's well worth it.

Conclusion

While training sets the stage for fast racing as it develops your abilities, you actually have to execute your races to display those abilities. Too often swimmers simply attack their races with great enthusiasm, and little intention. When racing butterfly events, you can avoid this mistake by planning your breathing, managing your legs, controlling your tempo, attacking your turns, and executing a race strategy. If you can accomplish these objectives, you'll be well on your way to achieving your goals.

**Andrew Sheaff is currently an assistant swimming coach at the University of Virginia, the 2021 NCAA Champions. He helps swimmers and triathletes find comfort, ease, and speed in the water by providing the foundational skill development tools that enable them to achieve their aquatic goals. If you have any questions about skill development or improving your performance, he can be reached at through his website www.andrewsheaffcoaching.com or via e-mail at andrew@andrewsheaffcoaching.com*