



MASTERSPLASH!

COLORADO MASTERS SWIMMING ASSOCIATION'S



OCTOBER 2001

Visit our web site - meet applications and more - at www.comsa.org

Why do we swim?

by Steve McDanal

Last December and January, a number of you responded to a questionnaire whose intent was to obtain information that would provide guidance for the COMSA elected and appointed board members. The board thanks you all for taking the time to assist us.

The returned surveys accounted for about 10% of the membership. This provided a basis for the following tabulations, however, it became apparent that some of these results may be biased. In some cases, the total does not sum to 100% due to rounding, combining categories, tabulations dropped due to ambiguity, N/A, "don't know what that means", unanswered, more than one answer, etc. Since many questions asked for a written answer rather than a yes or no, those answers had to be grouped into a limited number of classes. Sometimes the fit was OK, sometimes it wasn't real good.

Based on passed meet history, only about 33% (400/1200) of all COMSA members swim in meets. However, 69% of the respondents said they participate in meets, leading one to suspect that the returned surveys were predominately from competitive swimmers, not fitness swimmers or triathletes, etc. This bias affects most other tabulations.

COMSA has about 20% unattached members, therefore the questions regarding teams, coaches and workouts were irrelevant to them. What we don't know is how the unattached population breaks down between competitive and non-competitive. This is an unknown bias. So, with these thoughts in mind, here are the results.

Why do we participate in masters? Fitness: 40%; social 30%, competition 11%, triathlon training 5%, other 13%. Here is an interesting stat; 69% participate in meets, yet only 11% participate strictly for meets. Perhaps the large difference can be explained by the reason we participate in meets; competition 32%, social 30%, motivation/goal setting 23%, better times 11%. It can be argued that some of these categories overlap or are similar. In any case, about one third of the swimmers consider the social aspect as a major reason for attending meets.

Let's look at the stats on meets themselves. 63% felt that the number of meets was OK, 21% thought there were too few, 13% said there were too many. 3% didn't know or care. Other factors which determine whether or not a person attends a meet are: 76% said travel is an issue, 28% said cost is an issue, Pre-registration was a concern for 15% (however, many were confused by what this meant).

Of the 69% respondents who participate in meets of one kind or another, 75% competed in the state s/c championships. Sanctioned and recognized meets were attended by 23% and 22% respectively, although 57% did both. Then we have 14% swimming in dual meets, 13% in national meets, 10% in fun meets, 9% in postal meets, and 8% in time trials.

Workouts: Sixty-four percent gauge their fitness with a 'stopwatch'—some form of measuring (but only 11% swim strictly for better times). 96% train for strokes and starts and turns, although many said that starts were many times neglected. Most teams had both competition and triathlon/fitness workouts. And, probably not surprising, 85% said that working out with others is much better than working out alone. Of the 28% that swim only for triathlons, 65% said that masters coaching helps with triathlon leg, 64% said that the swimming leg gives them an advantage and 90% thought that distance masters workout would help.

FROM YOUR REGISTRAR

By Jack Buchanan

What a year for 2001, we had another record year with over 1400 swimmers registered, up 15% over last year. But now let's think about the year 2002.

2002 re-registration forms will be mailed around November 1st so use that form - The form for new swimmers, will be available on the web-site at that time - (comsa.org) in case you have forgot, the newsletter is being e-mailed now so make sure your swimmers let me know the e-mail address and use the web-site.

When writing or calling me for information, leave an address where you want it. Snail mail, e-mail, fax. Always refer to your registration number. Please make some copies of your registration card when you get it. IT COSTS \$5.00 FOR A NEW ONE. All address changes should go to me. This takes care of Swim Magazine, national, as well as COMSA. I must be able to read your registration form!!!!!!!!!! Forms are available on the COMSA web site if you need some for new people. www.Comsa.org.

A reminder: All October registrations will be held until November 1st unless there is a definite need for the month of October. Swimmers should send in the \$25.00 for 2002 and will be registered on November 1st.

Please call me if you need anything, a roster, forms or anything I might have - Our toll-free number is (877) COMSA34 or 1-800-266-7234

MASTERS NATIONAL CONVENTION POSTPONED

The 2001 National Convention scheduled to begin September 12, was postponed due to the events in New York and Washington D.C.. The convention will be rescheduled at a later date and will be reported in the next "Mastersplash".

**COMSA
Executive Members
and
Committee Chairs**

President

Dennis West
2447 Hooker St
Denver, CO 80212
(303) 332-1625
denniswest@visto.com

Past President

Melanie Dullea
9162 S. Kenwood Ct.
Highlands Ranch, CO 80126
(303) 791-0309
meljodullea@cs.com

Vice-President

Cindy Guthrie
4955 South Meadowlark Dr.
Castle Rock, CO 80104
(303) 660-5501
cinswims@earthlink.net

Secretary - Sanctions

Marcia Anziano
4235 E. 7th Ave
Denver, CO 80220
h (303) 355-5330
w (303) 986-1558
Fax (303) 985-1556
marfer@worldnet.att.net

Treasurer

Susan Nolte
P.O. Box 260523
Highlands Ranch, CO 80126
(303) 470-1660
chrisnolte@msn.com

Registrar

Jack Buchannan
P.O. Box 2609
Edwards, CO 81632
Toll Free
1-877266-7234
fax (970) 926-7953

Safety

Liz Stock
(303) 477-4344
w) (720) 913-1734

Records

Chris Nolte
(303) 470-1660
chrisnolte@msn.com

Top Ten

Michael Schoenecke
(303) 460-8723, w) 657-0605
rsginal941@aol.com

Social

Opening for a volunteer
Contact Dennis West
(303) 332-1625

Officials

John Tobin
(303) 674-7083
jtobin3es@aol.com

Marketing

Cathy Drozda
(303) 255-9556
ardrozda@rmi.net

Webmaster

Steve McDanal
(303) 236-1187
stev_mic@central.com

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USMS supplemental insurance:

Is it important? 58% said no; 31% said yes; 11% don't know or care. Of those who have insurance, 76% would swim without insurance. Only because many teams require USMS insurance, swimmers feel that insurance is important. Thus COMSA membership is required. Only 22% would drop USMS membership if given a choice.

Suggestions for improvement:

Many suggestions were made regarding the 2000 state meet. Some of those suggestions were accomplished at the 2001 meet and more improvements are being planned for 2002.

Other ideas include, sponsor a fitness meet, a triathlon. Hold board meetings in a more central location. Sponsor a stroke clinic or a swim camp. Provide special instructions for coaches. Eliminate pink and blue entry cards. Provide more online meet registration forms. Training tips for water and land workouts, weight training, nutrition. Hold more meets on the western slope. Hold more out of town meets. Keep costs down. Deck enter. More fun meets that lighten up on some rules (DQ on stroke and no false start) and let you swim more than 5 events. Combine male and female heats. Buy a timing system. Start meets on time. Design sew on patches for bags or jackets. Have a raffle at meets. Provide more and timely meet information. Rookie meets for first (or second) timers. Longer distance events like 400 breast and back. Altitude adjustment for postal meets. Make pink and blue cards more available.

keep strokin'

Managing Your Reactions to Traumatic Events

USOC Sport Psychology staff adapted this piece from the American Psychological Association's Website section on traumatic stress. For more information, go to <http://helping.apa.org>.
Tips for Coping with Your Reactions to the Recent Terrorist Attacks

Tuesday's terrorist attacks on the United States were the type of events we thought could never happen. Like other types of disasters they were unexpected, sudden and overwhelming. In some cases, there are no outwardly visible signs of physical injury, but there is nonetheless a serious emotional toll. It is common for people who have experienced traumatic situations to have very strong emotional reactions. Understanding normal responses to these abnormal events can aid you in coping effectively with your own feelings, thoughts, and behaviors. What happens to people after a disaster or other traumatic event?

Shock and denial are typical responses to terrorism, disasters and other kinds of trauma, especially shortly after the event. Both shock and denial are normal protective reactions.

Shock is a sudden and often intense disturbance of your emotional state that may leave you feeling stunned or dazed. Denial involves your not acknowledging that something very stressful has happened, or not experiencing fully the intensity of the event. You may temporarily feel numb or disconnected from life.

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Newsletter Deadline

The next Mastersplash Deadline will be Wednesday of the January COMSA Board Meeting. All news items and meet entry forms must be submitted by January 2, 2000 That means January 2, not the 5th or "what if I fax you tomorrow." A late submission is a no submission. We welcome and solicit articles written by individuals or from masters teams. Preference is on disk or e-mailed to denniswest@visto.com If you have a favorite web site that you use for workouts, nutritional news or swimming information, we want to share some web sites in our issues. Any comments or suggestions can be sent to Dennis West, 2447 Hooker St., Denver, CO 80211 or e-mailed to coquest@aol.com. If you have a team web page that you want linked to the COMSA web page, or other comments or suggestions concerning the COMSA web page (comsa.org) please e-mail Steve McDanal at: smcdanal@usgs.gov

Editors Note

By Dennis West

As the summer comes to a close and the many outdoor activities come to a close we can begin to look forward to the indoor swim season. There are several short course meter meets comming up (Green Mountain and DAC) as well as the fall season kick off meet at Evergreen. (see up comming meet schedule) Beginning in January the complete schedule of indoor meets are already in the planning stages and some are already scheduled. If you want to plan even farther out - SC Nationals will be held at the University of Hawaii in 2002.

There have been many positive changes within COMSA this year. The board has been working at continuing to updating systems and procedures to keep this growing organization moving forward and to improve the functionality of our swimming processes here in the state of Colorado. We still need more help in manning our committee chairs. There are several committee chairs that have vacancies. We are moving forward with planning and establishing swim clinics for January or February and are attempting to establish a coaches clinic as well. There are development meets planned for first timers. There has also been exceptional gains in membership over the past year. We are up 15% over last year's members to over 1400 registered members.

When you are completing your registration forms for next years membership, please be reminded that more and more of our communication is being done electronically and it begins with the clarity of your handwriting. Please write legibly.

Finishing your stroke properly makes you a better, more efficient swimmer

By Alex Kostich *Active.com*



Al Bello/Allsport

With a proper finishing stroke, your hand will exit the water below your suit line

One of the first segments of a swimmer's stroke to fall apart when fatigue sets in is the "finish," the last bit of underwater pulling that takes place during the arm's submerged cycle.

Powered by the triceps muscles of the upper arm, the finish of your stroke is essential in maintaining ideal efficiency in the water. Even world-class swimmers tire during their events and end up shortening their strokes on the back end, resulting in a rapid, choppy turnover that is less efficient and which ultimately requires more energy. As the triceps fatigue and cramp up, the arm bends at the elbow during the final part of the stroke, and the hand is pulled out of the water prematurely (by the hip area) before a full stroke is completed. A correct "finish" means that your elbow straightens while your forearm is still submerged at your side, with your hand leaving the water by your upper thigh (rather than your hip). This requires triceps conditioning and initially, concentration during the stroke cycle. There are a few ways you can strengthen the muscles required to execute a proper finish, the most obvious being in the weight room.

Weights: tricep extensions

Take a 10- or 15-pound dumbbell and position yourself in front of a mirror. Bending at the waist, look straight ahead and hold the weight at your side with your elbow bent 90 degrees. Then, slowly straighten your arm until it is extended behind you. You have just completed a "stroke finish."

Do 10 reps this way, taking care to slowly bring the weight back to the starting position (with your elbow bent at a right angle) before resuming the next rep. Switch arms with the weight and repeat.

This is a great exercise to do periodically to strengthen your triceps. If you do it consistently and correctly, you will notice a marked difference during your freestyle underwater pull.

Dry-land exercise

In addition to weights, you may want to consider using **bands** to condition your triceps. Instead of using weights, you can bend at the waist and pull on a pair of surgical tubing bands, repeating the motion as outlined above for a set of five times one minute. Keep your elbows close to your body and repeat the motion carefully and controlled, taking care to straighten your elbows completely with each extension.

Sculling

Another way to strengthen your arms to perfect your finish is to do a drill in the pool called sculling. Lying on your back with your feet facing the opposite end of the pool, push off the wall with your arms (instead of swimming head-first, you will be floating feet first to the far end).

With your arms above your head, wave your hands in a figure-eight motion, concentrating on pushing water above your head and away from you, propelling yourself across the pool. It is slow going, but you will feel the burn in your forearms and triceps if you do the drill correctly. This is also a great way to develop, or maintain, a "feel" for the water. As a result, you will gain a sense of comfort and efficiency during your pull that only seasoned swimmers have after years of training.

Once you have taken the time to master these simple exercises, there are other ways you can keep yourself in check during your workouts, as the shortening of the stroke is the first, most obvious element to fall apart during vigorous swimming.

Concentration

During your workouts, always be aware of where your hand is exiting the water during your underwater pull. Is it coming out by your hips, or by your bathing suit? Either way, you are swimming with a short, less efficient stroke. Force yourself to extend your elbow so that your hand exits the water by your upper thigh (below your suit line). To make sure you are extending all the way, graze your thumb by your thigh as you recover.

Pulling

A method I have depended on for years to ensure a proper stroke finish is to use paddles with only the finger-straps intact. I remove the wrist-bands and affix the paddles to my palms using just the middle-finger band. As such, if I shorten my stroke the paddles will either come flying off or they will pull my finger in an unnatural way, forcing me to continue on with my

stroke until the very end. This method of pulling forces me to be disciplined, and trains me to develop a "finish" to my stroke automatically.

During competition, always concentrate on your underwater pull and make sure you are maximizing the water you are pulling by stretching out your stroke on the front end and extending it at the back end. In time, a correct "finish" will be second nature and you will be at a distinct advantage to your less disciplined and short-stroked competitors.

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As the initial shock subsides, reactions vary from one person to another. The following, however, are normal responses to a traumatic event:

- Feelings become intense and sometimes are unpredictable. You may become more irritable than usual, and your mood may change back and forth dramatically. You might be especially anxious or nervous, or even become depressed.
- Thoughts and behavior patterns are affected by the trauma. You might have repeated and vivid memories of the event. These flashbacks may occur for no apparent reason and may lead to physical reactions such as rapid heartbeat or sweating. You may find it difficult to concentrate or make decisions, or become more easily confused. Sleep and eating patterns also may be disrupted.
- Recurring emotional reactions are common. Anniversaries of the event, such as at one month or one year, as well as reminders such as aftershocks from earthquakes or the sounds of sirens, can trigger upsetting memories of the traumatic experience. These 'triggers' may be accompanied by fears that the stressful event will be repeated.
- Interpersonal relationships often become strained. Greater conflict, such as more frequent arguments with teammates or family members, is common. On the other hand, you might become withdrawn and isolated and avoid your usual activities.
- Physical symptoms may accompany the extreme stress. For example, headaches, nausea, and chest pain may result and may require medical attention. Pre-existing medical conditions may worsen due to the stress. Issues specific to athletes and coaches in response to this week's events may include:
 - Fear of airline travel. As with stress reactions in general, different people will respond differently to the idea of air travel in light of this week's events. Some fear is natural and will dissipate over time. Coaches and team administrators should expect some athletes might take longer to be ready, and to be understanding of these

USMS Rule Changes Effective 9/20/01

by John Tobin

Easy Stuff

If your swimming has been in compliance with the rules in the past year, the following changes simply make things more permissible.

o Breaststroke.

"The elbows shall be under the water except for the final stroke before the turn, during the turn and the last stroke at the finish of the prescribed distance."

Previously, only the last stroke prior to the finish could the elbows be above the water.

o Butterfly

"the body shall be kept on the breast."

Previously, the swimmers shoulders also needed to be inline with the surface of the water.

o Backstroke

"Some part of the swimmer must break the surface of the water throughout the race, except it shall be permissible for the swimmer to be completely submerged during the turn, at the finish and for a distance of not more than 15 meters (16.4 yards) after the start and after each turn."

Submerged at finish is new.

Hard Stuff

FINA has changed the rule in butterfly for long course and short course meters record recognition. World Masters and USMS are waiting clarification. In the meantime, world records in the fly, IM and medley relay require the butterfly to use the dolphin kick. Breaststroke kick will probably not be recognized. This does not apply to short course yards. The use of the breaststroke kick in meters races is not a disqualification; it only complicates any consideration for record performances by FINA.

Any swimmer trying for a FINA record must fill out a form for the meet referee PRIOR to the race. Copies of this form will be with the COMSA meet kit or can be obtained from COMSA. Remember, this only applies to meters until Masters can get a clarification (in the spring of '02).

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differences. This issue needs to be balanced, however, with the need to return to a "normal" routine as soon as possible which, for elite athletes, includes regular air travel.

- "I feel so helpless." Athletes are sometimes frustrated by the feeling that their ongoing training schedules, limited resources, and physical training demands prohibit them from engaging in activities like giving blood or donating money. Explore alternative ways to feel helpful, such as through local volunteer opportunities, or helping others who may be experiencing stress.

- Loss of motivation. While some athletes and coaches have responded to this crisis with an increased emphasis on their training, others find themselves wondering about whether what they are doing is meaningful given the scope of the tragedy unfolding elsewhere. This, too, is a natural reaction to a stressful situation, but if the feeling persists, it may be useful to explore these feelings with someone such as family, a friend, or USOC Sport Psychology staff.
- "I'm not supposed to be upset. I don't know anyone who was killed," or "None of my teammates is upset, so I shouldn't be either." Personal reactions to stress are just that. Personal. Try not to judge the validity of your own feelings against an abstract standard of what you think others or your teammates are feeling. What is important is that you acknowledge and deal with your own feelings, positive or negative. Denying how you feel can have long-term negative effects.

How should I help myself and those close to me?

There are a number of steps you can take to help restore emotional well being and a sense of control following this week's catastrophic events, including the following:

- Give yourself time to heal. Anticipate that this may be a difficult time in your life. Try to be patient with changes in your emotional state.

- Communicate your experience in whatever ways feel comfortable to you - such as by talking with family or close friends, or keeping a diary. USOC Sport Psychology has staff trained to help you talk about these issues. Stop by or call x4722 to make an appointment.

- Engage in healthy behaviors to enhance your ability to cope with stress. Eat well-balanced meals and get plenty of rest. If you experience ongoing difficulties with sleep, you may be able to find some relief through relaxation techniques. Avoid alcohol and drugs.

- Establish or reestablish routines such as eating meals at regular times and following your normal training routine.

- Avoid major life decisions if possible because these activities tend to be highly

stressful.

- Become knowledgeable about what to expect as a result of trauma. Some of the 'Additional Resources' listed at the end of this fact sheet may help you with this learning process.

Additional Resources

USOC Sport Psychology has staff and resources available for athletes and coaches wanting help or more information about these issues. We can work with athletes and coaches understand their stress reactions and can help them find constructive ways of dealing with the emotional impact. For off-Complex athletes and coaches, we have a Registry of sport psychology consultants from which to make referrals. Call (719) 578-4722 for more information.

The American Red Cross may be able to direct you to additional resources. In Colorado Springs, call 632-3563.

IOC Gives FINA Thumbs Down on New Olympic Events

LAUSANNE - The IOC has turned down FINA's request to expand the schedule of swimming events in Athens. FINA had requested that they be permitted to add 50m sprint events for all strokes in Athens and also to add Open Water swimming events to the schedule.

These requests were turned down and in fact the IOC has issue a new lower quota for the number of swimmers permitted to participate in Athens. The list of participants in Sydney was 1,448. In Athens this has been lowered to a maximum of 1,300.

Ian Thorpe in Narrow Escape at World Trade Center

Australian swimmer Ian Thorpe narrowly escaped the tragedy which struck the World Trade Center in New York on Tuesday.

Thorpe had been visiting New York accompanied by Michelle Flaskas, wife of manager David Flaskas when he decided to take an early morning stroll and visited the World Trade Center building. He decided he would return with his camera after breakfast and take photographs from the top floor viewing platform.

Mrs. Flaskas was at the hotel at the time. "Thank goodness he didn't leave fifteen minutes earlier", an emotional Flaskas said from his home in Sydney.



COMSA
 c/o Jack Buchanan
 P.O. Box 2609
 Edwards, CO 81632



DATE	ORGANIZATION	CONTACT
2001 - 2002 Meet Detail - FALL		
Oct 6	DU - All Star Meet	Ken Classen 1270 S. Dale Ct. Denver, CO 80219 303-936-4730
Oct 14	Evergreen	Melissa McInerney 30887 Isenberg Ln 80439 303-679-8620
Nov 18	Green Mountain	Suzanne Fowler Green Mtn Rec Center 13198 W. Green Mtn Dr. Lakewood CO 80228 987-7840
Dec 8/9	DAC	Chuck Cary 1325 Glenarm Denver 80204
Jan 12	Castle Rock	Cindy Hawkinson 4955 S. Meadowlark Dr. Castle Rock Co 80104 660-5501
Jan/Feb ?	Boulder Pentation	Beih Zengrat 7460 Mt. Meeker Longmont, Co 80503 530-1015
Feb 23	Loveland Masters	Mark Whiteside 988 W. 41st St Loveland CO 80538 970-667-8174
Feb 10	Highlands Ranch Masters	Rob Nassar 8717 S. Appletree Pl. Highlands Ranch 80126
March 2	DU - Mille Hi Mille DU - Short and Sweet Meet	Ken Classen 1270 S. Dale Ct. Denver, CO 80219 303-936-4730
March 3	Tentative dates	
April 12, 13, 14	State Championships University of Denver Tentative	Sara Wise

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