

# Clean Sweep for Texas!

## MACA News Announces Inaugural Web Awards



The inaugural MACA News Web Awards have been announced, and it looks like a clean sweep for Texas. Web sites from the Lone Star State were awarded the top spots in each of the two categories this year. H2Ouston Swims was the unanimous winner in the Team category, while the Gulf LMSC emerged with a narrow victory in the LMSC category. Coincidentally, webmaster Sheila Baskett maintains both of the award winning projects from Texas. Indiana also had an out-

standing showing, with Greater Indiana (GRIN) placing second in the LMSC Category and Indy Swim Fit third in the Team category. Both of the award winning web sites from Indiana were created by webmaster Dave Oplinger. Although California web sites didn't finish #1 in either category, they certainly had the greatest depth of high-quality sites, including five of the top ten Team web sites and



two of the top ten LMSC sites. Two of the Award Winning California Web Sites (Fog City and Pacific Masters) were created by Michael Moore.



All web sites found in the USMS links and the Harvard Swimming links were evaluated for: Navigation, Speed, Design, Content and Use of Technology. Across the board, the highest rated web sites scored well in a majority of categories. To promote and enhance this recognition, the MACA News has created an award graphic that is available for any of the winners who would like to display it on their web sites.

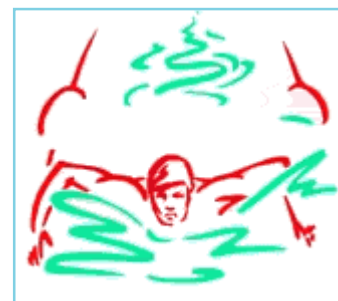
The recently launched H2Ouston Swims web site was the most highly rated of any web site in either category. Interestingly enough, the H2Ouston Swims web site is the one that most closely resembles Jim Matysek's USMS Web Site. H2Ouston Swims coach Emmett Hines, who is one of the

most eloquent writers and speakers in Masters swimming, had only one thing to say. "Cool!"

The MACA News Web Awards recognize many of the outstanding local and regional web communication projects in Masters Swimming. Not only does this recognition serve to inspire prospective webmasters, it also serves as a resource for others who wish to improve existing sites. Aside from the United States Masters Swimming Newsletter of the Year Award, there is no other recognition for communications sponsored by any swimming organization in the United States.



If you are coordinating a web project, or know of an outstanding website not listed here, please contact the MACA News with the URL of the web site. Maybe your site could make the 2000 MACA News Top Ten.





# Letter from the President

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Greetings and Happy Holidays to you all. With this in mind, I want to talk to you about something that has a somber tone to it. One of the main causes of heart attack and sudden death in people over 35 (athletes included) is the consuming of excess fatty foods and calories....something that is all too easily done this time of year...along with intermittent strenuous activity that can overload the unprepared or untrained heart.

Public health analysis shows that the time for a great many heart attacks occurs Monday mornings. This, after a few days of eating to excess and extra physical strain on the whole body. Combine this excess with the stress of getting started for the upcoming week, and you have the makings of cardiac trouble.



Aside from Mondays, there is another circumstance conducive to cardiac distress, and it can happen quite often. The "gearing up" of the body for demanding physical exercise sets in motion a cascade of biochemical events that can precipitate a heart attack if one does not use logic in preparing for such activity.

Being in charge of a masters workout on a daily basis, I often have concern for my swimmers' welfare. I wonder if they are truly ready for vigorous exercise, or are they a physiologic time bomb waiting to explode. Recently the administration of my facility purchased two AED's (automated external defibrillators) and had several people trained to use them (including me). All of us who swim hard are at risk, though I like to think less so than the general population, but one never really knows for sure what's going on inside our bodies at any particular time.

After doing extensive research on sudden death in athletes, I have concluded that these units are vital to the total preparedness of a hosting facility, be it for regular workouts or competitions. In my opinion the AED's are foolproof in that they are voice-directed, simple to use and can not be used incorrectly under the duress of a medical emergency. There are several models to choose from, some I consider better than others.

It is my concern at this time, and my duty as MACA president, to put the word out on having these units with trained personnel on hand at all times. With Thanksgiving just past and the upcoming winter holiday season approaching, we should be thankful and joyous about a lot of things, especially our health which should never be taken for granted.

I guess what I am saying is that I wish you all the best for the upcoming holiday season and the new century with the three most important words I know: PEACE OF MIND.

*Ed Nessel*

MACA President



## WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The VIII World Masters Swimming Championships are being held in Munich, Germany, from July 29 through August 4, 2000. A group of coaches will be designated by the USMS Coaches Committee to assist those American swimmers who so desire. The Coaches Committee will award stipends to the selected group, which will be a maximum of four coaches (one head coach and three assistant coaches) and chosen by a subcommittee of the Coaches Committee.

Coaches are responsible for their own transportation, accommodations and food. Of course, coaches may coach their own swimmers as well when attending the meet. For information about how to apply to coach in Munich, please contact coach Scott Rabalais at [ScottRabalais@compuserve.com](mailto:ScottRabalais@compuserve.com) or (504) 766-5937. Information on the meet may be obtained from Tracy Grilli at the National Office at [usms@usms.org](mailto:usms@usms.org) or telephone (603) 537-0203.

## ASCA Masters Coaches Certification

The Pacific Coaches Clinic, one of the largest Coaches Clinics in the US, will be held in Napa, CA, January 7-9, 2000. The clinic will host the Masters Certification School. The school is for ASCA registered coaches who wish to pursue ASCA Certification. The Masters School is a Level 1 Course. The course will be presented by Brian Stack. Faculty will include Kerry O'Brien and Emmett Hines of H2Ouston Swims. For information on the school please contact Brian Stack at [stackb@aol.com](mailto:stackb@aol.com) or call at 510-235-6842 (before 9 PM, PST please).

# From Brian Stack

Hello MACA members and Friends,

For the past three years it's been my pleasure to serve as President of MACA. I've learned a lot and had the opportunity to meet and work with many Masters Coaches around the country. It's also a pleasure to turn the reigns over to Ed Nessel. I've sat in committee meetings with Ed over the last few years at Convention and have great faith in his ability to lead this organization. He has got good help in his VP Dan Frost, a highly motivated and creative guy. Steve Schofield will stay on as Treasurer. Steve and retiring Membership Chair Don Mehl worked hard and earned my respect with their contributions during my tenure. Bill Volckening has done an awesome job rescuing and rehabilitating our newsletter. Welcome to Emmett Hines, who has recently stepped into the position of Membership Chair. I'd like to thank Mo Chambers and Clay Evans for the hard work and moral support they've given. Kerry O'Brien, Mike Collins, Scott Rabalais, Terry Laughlin, Doug Husteis, and Todd Samland were always available to hear my thoughts, and offer suggestions and encouragement. I'd also like to thank all the coaches I've met doing the Coaches Schools at Nationals, Convention and at ASCA World Clinics. Those coaches who are just starting out in the world of Masters Swimming are my real inspiration, their goals should be the goals of our organization. I remember one encounter at USMS Convention a few years back. I met a couple of young coaches engaged in a lively discourse about how to "...do it like you guys in California". I was happy that they were envious of the multitude of successful programs here in CA, and inspired that they were willing to take the risk and build toward a large program for themselves and their swimmers. I've managed to keep track of one of those coaches and am happy to say that he has realized his dream and built the Cambridge Masters Team into the biggest and (dare I say it?) the best program in New England. Awesome job Rob Berry! I like to think the advice I gave him when we first met was a



factor in his success. What were those words of wisdom you ask? I think they went something like "...so do it!" Of course through the discussion we fleshed out the idea of "doing it" a bit more, but basically the story is Rob got excited and made it happen. Now his swimmers benefit everyday from his vision and energy. I hope MACA will continue to be a resource and an inspiration to all of our members new and old coaches alike. So, in closing I'd like to encourage our current members to use MACA, support MACA, and challenge MACA. There's still a lot of work to be done, and lots of space for you to help. Thanks again to all of you who made the last three years my best years in Masters Coaching.



Ryan Henry Rabalais was born to Muriel and Scott on Wednesday, November 24, at midnight. He weighed 7 pounds, 12 ounces, and was 19 1/2 inches. Both baby and mom are doing great. Older brother Ross, and Ryan are pictured, above.

*Brian Stack*

Past President MACA



# The MACA NEWS

## Top Ten Masters Swimming Team Web Sites of 1999



1) **H2Ouston Swims**, TX (<http://www.h2oustonswims.org/>): The recently launched H2Ouston Swims web site was the most highly rated of any web site in either category. The site features a discussion forum, a password-protected swimmer roster, a Houston weather forecast window, a swimmer poll and many other great features. In light of the high level of information and expertly handled use of technology, the design is remarkably clean and simple. The site is easy to navigate and it loads very quickly. H2Ouston Swims is a truly outstanding web project.



2) **Team New York Aquatics**, NY (<http://www.tnya.org/index1.html>): The Team New York Aquatics web site is perhaps the finest design product of all the sites reviewed. Not only is the design wonderfully comprehensive and stylish, it loads quickly and is very easy to navigate. Kudos to webmaster Andy Willett and TNYA for developing a sharp, professional looking project in high style.



3) **Indy Swim Fit**, IN (<http://www.mindspring.com/~goldstein/indyswim/>): Mel Goldstein is a consummate professional and a very busy man this year. Goldstein is directing the 2000 USMS One Hour Swim and the Short Course Nationals, and when it comes to information he means business. It is no surprise to see his team's web site in the Top Ten. Indy Swim Fit's web site is professional looking and informative. With a select group of well chosen links, easy navigation and quick loading, the site is an outstanding resource. Webmaster Dave Oplinger, who also created the award winning GRIN web site, is clearly first rate.



4) **Menlo Park Masters**, CA (<http://www.menloparkmasters.com/>): Menlo Park's web site is a winner for its no-nonsense approach. The site is maintained by Randy Brasche, and features clean design, fast loading pages, easy navigation and excellent information. Menlo Park is well known for its unusual and challenging team events. One of the more interesting discoveries is their "Killer Quad" challenge. Check out their site to see what it's all about.



5) **San Mateo Marlins**, (<http://www.webgal.com/marlins/>): The San Mateo Marlins web site is loaded with information. It is an exceptionally professional looking, easy to navigate site. San Mateo has a long tradition of excellence in swimming. It is nice to see this tradition reflected by the quality of their web site. Webmaster Dana Hunter has done a first rate job with the Marlins' site.



6) **Fog City Masters**, San Francisco CA (<http://www.pacificmasters.org/fog/>): One of the most important reasons to have a web site is to provide web surfers with the ability to get information quickly. The Fog City Masters web site is a prime example of fast information. The site is simple, easy to navigate and very easy on the eyes. Webmaster Michael Moore demonstrates his versatility by presenting a wonderfully streamlined product.



7 TIE) **Cincinnati Marlins**, (<http://syranu.acb.uc.edu/cmm/index.html>): The Cincinnati Marlins web site is an outstanding example of the merits of simplicity. The page is very readable, easy to navigate and loads in an instant. The familiar Cincinnati Marlins logo is the only image on the home page, which is refreshing in light of the many cluttered web sites. The Marlins provide just enough information to give visitors a taste, without being the least bit overwhelming.



7 TIE) **Crawfish Aquatics**, (<http://www.crawfishaquatics.com>): Crawfish Aquatics is an excellent all-around web site and an exceptionally good resource. In light of the fact that their site is shared by the Crawfish USA Swimming and Masters teams, it is great to see such a large section of the web site devoted to Masters. The site, which is maintained by Ken Roark and Scott Rabalais, features nearly 70 articles written specifically for Masters swimmers. Coach Rabalais' prolific accomplishment is quite evident throughout.

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8) **Mountain View Masters**, CA (<http://www.mvm.org/>): Mountain View Masters is one of the first Masters swimming teams to appear on the web. Their home page continues to draw visitors with weekly workout updates. Of all the team websites, Mountain View is one of the best resources for outside visitors. "We have found our web site to be very helpful for our swimmers," says Coach Alan Liu, "We have received a lot of positive feedback from other swimmers around the world."



9) **Garden State Masters**, NJ (<http://www.gmswim.org/>): Webmaster Ed Tsuzuki has done an excellent job bringing New Jersey into the information loop with the GSM web site. This site is quick to load, informative and easy to navigate. "This is tremendous news!!" said Tsuzuki upon learning of the Top Ten Award. "Thank you, on behalf of all of us at GSM, for this wonderful recognition. I do have to admit that I am quite surprised, considering the many great web sites that are out there."



10) **Southern California Aquatics**, CA (<http://www.swim.net/scaq/>): When you have the largest Masters program in the United States, a good web site is an incredibly important communication tool. Clay Evans and Bonnie Adair of Southern California Aquatics have initiated another huge project with their SCAQ web site. SCAQ's home page contains all of the important information, including the award winning "swim.net" newsletter, which is one of the nicest HTML newsletters anywhere.

**Honorable Mention:** Bruin Masters at UCLA (<http://www.spma.net/uclabruins>) DC Aquatic Club (<http://www.swimdcac.org/>); Lakeside Masters, KY (<http://lakesideswim.org/LakesideMastershome.html>); South Oakland Seals, MI (<http://www.southoaklandseasl.com/>); Stanford Masters (<http://www.stanford.edu/group/masters/>); Tualatin Hills Barracudas (<http://www.barracudas.org/>);

## The MACA NEWS

### Top Ten Masters Swimming LMSC Web Sites of 1999



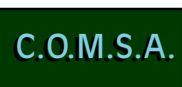
1) **Gulf Masters Swim Committee** (<http://www.gulfmastersswimming.org/>): It may seem like a subtle distinction, but one of the greatest redeeming qualities of a good web site is its speed. If it takes too long to load, surfers will go to the next site — even if the slow-loading site is the most magnificent work of art. Gulf webmaster Shiela Baskett has a true knack for producing speedy web sites. The Gulf web site is informative, easy to navigate and well-designed — but what separates it from the rest of the crowd is it's remarkable loading speed.... "faster than a speeding bullet!"



2) **Greater Indiana Masters Swimming** (<http://www.netusa1.net/~dwo/GRINNL.html>): Indiana LMSC webmaster Dave Oplinger deserves high praise for producing an outstanding web site for GRIN. Oplinger demonstrates the uncanny ability to achieve an aesthetic that is both friendly and corporate looking. This aesthetic sets GRIN apart from all other Masters swimming web sites. Not only is it professional looking, but it loads quickly and is easily navigated. GRIN is truly fortunate to have such an outstanding resource.



3) **Pacific Masters Swimming** (<http://www.pacificmasters.org/index.shtml>): The beauty of the Pacific Masters web site is its capacity to communicate and document the high level of activity in the Pacific LMSC. Webmaster Michael Moore expertly conquers the challenge of keeping the site easy to navigate, loaded with information and current. Moore, who is also webmaster for the Fog City Masters, is clearly one of the leading webmasters in USMS.



4) **Colorado Masters Swimming Association**, (<http://www.comsa.org/>): The Colorado LMSC web site is a winner for its solid, businesslike approach. Web designer Rob Nasser provides a clean, simple, professional looking web project, and the dividends are clear. The COMSA site is one of the fastest loading, succinct web sites in Masters Swimming.



5) **Delaware Valley LMSC** (<http://www.dvmasters.org/>): Even though Masters swimmers are adults, we still like to have fun. Thanks to Delaware Valley webmaster Charlot Figgatt, the DVLMS web site is one of the more enjoyable LMSC web sites. Visitors are greeted with some enjoyable design elements and lots of information about some of the greatest Masters swimming in the Colonies Zone. Barney Hungerford's Open Water information is among the most comprehensive in USMS.

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# USMS Mentor Clinic: San Ramon, CA

By Dan Frost

On November 14, about 20 coaches and 45 swimmers traveled to San Ramon, California, on a cloudy Sunday to participate in the latest USMS Coach – Mentor Clinic.

Leading off the two-hour Coach's clinic was the host, Tina Talbot. Tina is the coach of the San Ramon Masters, and she welcomed the attendees to her home pool, the modestly named San Ramon Olympic Pool. Tina, who is also the Fitness chair for Pacific Masters Swimming (PMS), began her introduction with some tips on how the coaches could become more involved with PMS. Some of her points included hosting swim meets and open water events, attending PMS board meetings, and participating in the upcoming Pacific Swim Coaches Clinic in Napa. Tina then went on to introduce the three principal speakers, Kerry O'Brien, Penny Leach, and Mo Chambers.

Kerry, coach of the Walnut Creek Masters, made a presentation titled "Slowly Swimming to Success" where he focused on improving performance in freestyle by swimming slow. In emphasizing his point, he showed a brief video clip of himself swimming freestyle along with an instantaneous velocity plot. While the plot showed the cyclic "peaks" and "valleys" of his speed, Kerry illustrated that coaches can help their swimmers concentrate on controlling, or reducing, the size of the "valleys" instead of simply trying to maximize the "peaks". He then pointed out some sets that he prescribes to his swimmers, including "Minus stroke count work". By forcing swimmers to swim lengths with a reduced stroke count, stroke errors become more easily apparent. The swimmers are also forced to swim on slower intervals, giving more control of the workout back to the coach. Kerry noted that WCM has had good success using freestyle stroke drills and minus stroke count sets.



photos courtesy of Michael Moore

Kerry was followed by Penny Leach, who also coaches at Walnut Creek. An accomplished backstroker, Penny presented "Backstroke Head to Toe". She described finer points of the backstroke, such as head position, rotation, hand acceleration, kick, pull pattern, and recovery. She also illustrated a number of different drills for each of those finer points.



Mo Chambers came forward to present "Thriving on the Diversity: Marketing and Team Building Ideas". Mo, currently coaching at the Courtside Club in Los Gatos, Calif., presented some of the experiences she has had in building her programs, as well as tips she has learned from other coaches. She immediately pointed out that Masters swimmers are diverse in age, ability, goals, and level of commitment, then asks, "How do we draw all of these varied personalities into our programs, build one single team, meet all these goals, create workouts for all these levels, and get some sleep?" It turns out that successful Masters coaches don't just need to deal with this diversity, they must thrive on it. Mo, along with some help from the audience,

presented numerous ideas for marketing a program, pampering new swimmers, creating leaders and mentors in the group, helping the swimmers feel like a team (Secret: Look like a team, feel like a team), and keeping momentum going in the "slow" months. She closed by noting, "People do not leave an environment where they are being challenged, are learning, and are having fun."

With a few extra minutes to spare, Kerry got up again to talk about his recent experiences at the USMS Training Camp at the Olympic Training Center. He was particularly impressed at both the quality of the facilities and the helpfulness of everybody he encountered there, from the staff to the physiologists, and even the athletes from other sports. He noted that this camp, the





## USMS Mentor Clinic

second, ran much smoother than the first primarily because of the support of the OTC staff. Kerry not only encouraged swimmers to consider attending a future USMS Training Camp there, but he also encouraged the coaches present to apply to be a future Camp coach.

After an hour break for lunch, the coaches met the swimmers on the pool deck for the swimmers' clinic. The swimmers were divided into four groups, based on ability, and rotated among four different stations. Each group spent 30 minutes at a station before rotating to the next one. The novice swimmers started with Kerry, who taught them how to swim slowly to freestyle success by employing the drills that he presented to the coaches earlier. The first of two intermediate groups worked with Penny, who instructed them on the backstroke drills that she, too, presented to the coaches. The remaining group of intermediate Masters worked with Tina, who helped keep the swimmers warm in the water and practice some of the tips presented by Kerry and Penny. The final group of advanced swimmers began their rotation with Mo, who

videotaped their freestyle and backstroke. Other coaches present helped the principal coaches, circulating among the different stations along with the swimmers.

After two hours in the water, the swimmers got a welcome opportunity to dry off, warm up inside, grab a small bite to eat, and have their videotapes analyzed by the coaches. Tina was able to round up four TV/VCRs, which helped reviewing 45 videotapes go that much smoother. By all accounts, it was a successful clinic for all who came!

## Top Ten LMSC Web Sites

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6) **Florida LMSC** (<http://home.att.net/~floridalmisc/>): Rarely is the content of an LMSC web site of general interest to those who reside outside of the LMSC. The Florida LMSC web site is definitely an exception to the rule. In addition to being a fast, simple, well designed site, it has some great information. Their web archive is full of original newsletter articles from Florida's award-winning newsletter. It's definitely worth a visit.



7) **Kentucky Masters Swimming** (<http://www.kylmsc.org/index.html>): Meg Smath is a truly multitalented individual. Smath, who is chairman of the USMS Rule Book Committee and Kentucky LMSC Secretary, is also the webmaster for Kentucky. The web site is a winner for its simple, straightforward approach to information. The site also contains "Kentucky Waves", which is one of the better HTML newsletters.



8) **New England Masters** (<http://www.swimnem.org/>): The New England LMSC is a proud, spirited and talented group of individuals. Their web site is not only fast and simply designed, but it continues to draw visitors for its newsletter archive and all-time Top Ten lists. Carolyn Dooman and newly appointed webmaster Tom Mack deserve a round of applause for maintaining the tradition of excellence in New England.

**SPMA**

9) **Southern Pacific** (<http://www.spma.net/>): SPMA webmaster Wayne McCauley has created a monster! The SPMA web site is packed full of information for a very active LMSC. There are nearly 20 different categories of information, including the award-winning "swim.net" newsletter. The site also includes some great archived articles, and up-to-date information on events and LMSC meeting minutes. With so much information to communicate, it's great to have such a speedy resource.



10) **Pacific Northwest Association** (<http://www.swimpna.org/>): When Jim McCleery took over as the PNA webmaster in 1999, he was fortunate to have a good foundation, which had been established by Dan Frost. McCleery not only moved the site to a new location and upgraded the design, he added some excellent new features. The site includes a PDF registration form, Northwest Zone Records and a new NCAA conversion applet. Visitors can enter times for conversion between short course yards, short course meters and long course meters. PNA is a sleeper, but it is certainly one of the most influential and innovative LMSC sites.

# MAKING THE BEST: MASTERS COACHES

By Dan Frost

*Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from a three-part series. Part one covers the swimmers without coaches, and part three covers swimmers and coaches.*

Do you coach a Masters swim team? Congratulations! Coaching a group of Masters Swimmers is a uniquely rewarding, albeit demanding, responsibility. Masters are very keen to learn how to improve and listen intently to advice and instruction. Coaching Masters also keeps you on your toes since Masters do not hesitate to question anything that does not make sense or seem applicable to them. Masters will work diligently without constant supervision to put your suggestions into action. Masters appreciate sincerity, timely guidance, dedication, and a good sense of humor from their coaches.

Just as there is no such thing as a typical Masters swimmer, there is no such thing as a typical Masters coach. It is very likely that the coach at the pool down the street or in the next town is employed very differently from you. The spectrum of Masters coaches includes (but certainly is not limited to):

- The head coach or assistant coach of the youth swim club also coaches the Masters team. The coach is employed either by the host pool or the swim club.
- A volunteer, such as an off-duty lifeguard or pool staff member, or another swimmer, coaches or supervises the Masters team for no added compensation.
- A former youth or high school swimmer, now an undergraduate or graduate college student, coaches the Masters team to earn a little extra money.
- The Masters club is an independent private enterprise owned and managed by the coaches with the club being the coaches' full-time profession and main source of income.
- A person with an already steady income, from another job or a pension, enjoys the fun aspects of coaching the Masters team.

Coaches also work in various environments. Self-employed coaches who run their own clubs can earn more money by attracting more swimmers, but often must pay to rent pool time. Other coaches who are salaried employees of private health clubs or public pools do not directly see their income

linked to the numbers of swimmers that are coached by them. Some rely on swim coaching for their primary source of income, while others receive little or no compensation. Even those who coach professionally may have a wide range of additional responsibilities, such as coaching other swim teams, administrative management of the swim club(s), management of the aquatic facility, and duties within the governing swimming associations.



Coaches also possess varying degrees of experience in the sport and skill at coaching. In many ways, developing coaching skill comes from experience, though education also has an important role in the development of coaches.

Realize that because there are many differences among Masters coaches, there is no one formula to help a particular coach become the best coach that he or she can be. However, there are many ways that coaches, no matter what their disposition, can help give their swimmers the best possible chance to achieve individual and team swimming goals. Here is a collection of ideas to try:

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# Ways to make the most of your coaching

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## **SAFETY**

A coach's highest priority should be to help ensure that swimmers can participate in a safe environment. Safety at the pool encompasses many things, but a coach has the most influence on conducting the Masters workout in a manner that reduces the risk of injury to participants from their fellow Masters or from other pool patrons. Coaches should also be watchful for hazards from pool equipment, both in the water and on the pool deck, and point out those dangers to pool management. A coach should also always be able to summon emergency medical assistance. It is not a bad idea to know basic first aid and CPR as well. USMS has a Safety Education Committee where coaches may learn further specifics about safely conducting Masters workouts.

## **BUILD KNOWLEDGE**

Writing workouts, or even a long range training plan, for your Masters group is difficult. What techniques should be taught, and what drills or lessons will best reinforce those techniques? How long should the workout sets be? There are many sources of swimming information for coaches, including the USMS Coaches Committee, coaching associations, books, magazines, clinics, and the World Wide Web. A good source of free information is the Masters Swimming Canada website, which contains *Hints for Coaching Masters (Third edition)*.

## **KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS**

Coaches are faced with an incredible challenge of meeting the variety of needs of swimmers who are diverse in age and conditioning. To meet all of those needs, a coach has to know what those needs are. Sometimes, swimmers will approach the coach with a list of goals and desires. However, it is often left up to the coach to ascertain what their swimmers hope to get out of participating in Masters. A good idea for a coach is to be available for at least a few minutes after workout for the sole purpose of talking with, and getting to know, the swimmers and their desires.

## **DO NOT OVERDO**

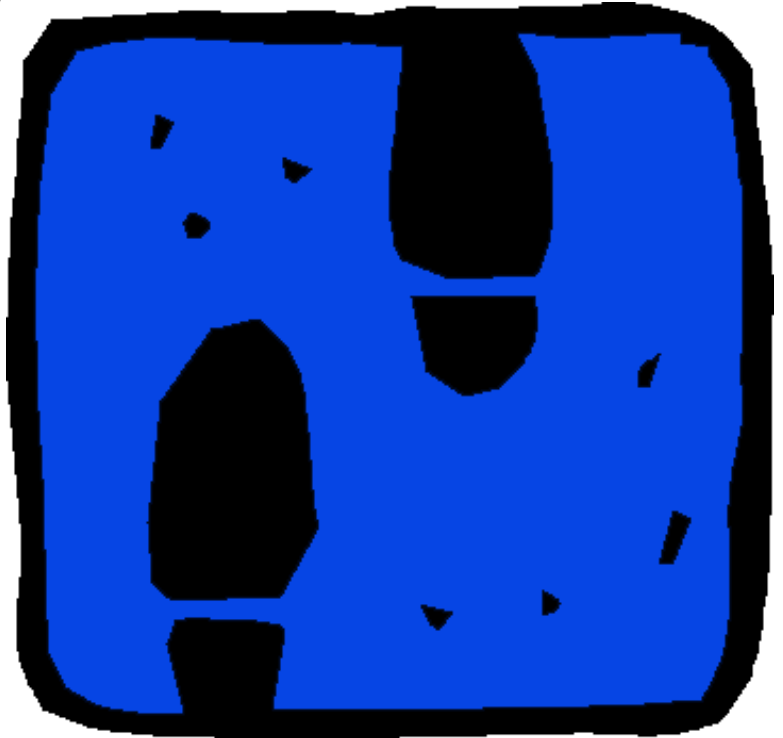
When you "know your customers", you also discover their limits. Masters swimmers definitely have limits. Talented high school and college age swimmers can swim seemingly endless workouts, sometimes twice a day, with incredible intensity. Very, very few Masters can do the same. In keeping with maintaining a safe workout environment, coaches should also put a high priority on injury prevention.

## **ORGANIZE THE TEAM**

Swimmers often look to the coach for team organization. Since the coach organizes workout times and workout sets, he (or

she) "naturally" becomes the person that the swimmers turn to for scheduling the team social, arranging for the group travel to distant competitions, and so forth. Not all coaches have the extra time to do this. However, most Masters value any extra help that the coach can give.

Coaches do not necessarily have to do everything when trying to organize the team. There are certainly many ways in which your swimmers can assume some of the responsibility of team organization.



## **BE AN ENCOURAGER AND AN ENTERTAINER**

Not everybody has the gift of charisma, and it is not imperative that coaches be highly charismatic and entertaining when they coach. However, if you do have that kind of outgoing, extroverted, and entertaining personality, use it! When the going gets tough in the water, and your Masters are struggling through a challenging workout, your encouragement and a good laugh can be the difference in whether your swimmers get over the hump.

## **DEVELOP YOUR WRITING SKILLS**

Writing skills?!? Believe it or not, you can become a more successful coach when you can put your ideas down on paper. A good place to start is to produce or contribute to a team

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# MAKING THE BEST

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newsletter. Newsletters are a great way to communicate to all of your swimmers. You can write about anything...workouts, upcoming events, technique tips, recognizing your swimmers, and so on. Reading the works of other coaches will help give you good ideas for your own articles, and a starting point on how your ideas should be expressed.

Writing is also a big key in being widely recognized as a good coach. Also, the value of writing in promoting your team can not be understated. When your name appears on a team promotional flyer, a newsletter article, an article in a sports magazine, a technical journal, or even a book, it helps to identify you as a knowledgeable coach and your team as an excellent one to join. It also spreads good news about your program to more people than good old "word-of-mouth".

## TRY SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT (OCCASIONALLY)

If "variety is the spice of life," then it is certainly the "spice of Masters workouts!" Granted, some swimmers are simply content with going up and down the pool 100 times an hour, day after day. However, others welcome variety from time to time. This variety is not just adding or subtracting a few hundred yards between workouts, or throwing in a new drill to perform. I am talking about doing something COMPLETELY different. A good example was the first Masters workout I ever attended. Instead of jumping right into the water and pounding out 2000-3000 yards as you would expect, we spent at least half of the hour on the pool deck, huddled around the dry erase board, listening to the coach give a presentation on the new "wave" breaststroke. (This was in 1990 when Mike Barrowman was beginning to have great success using it.) That presentation, compared to a "normal" workout, was a much more compelling reason for me to come back to Masters for a second time. Besides such presentations, coaches can set aside time for fun relays and games, practice starts from the starting blocks, watching videotapes of the Olympics, and other activities limited only by imagination.

## TRAVEL TO MEETS

Coaches should consider traveling to Masters meets and competitions, especially those where their swimmers are participating. For your swimmers who compete in meets, the meet itself is an extension of the training program that you, as a coach, are helping to provide. As their coach, you are likely the best person to advise your swimmers on how to perform their best in the meet, based on your observations of them in your workouts.

You should also go to see a Masters meet if you have never

been to one before in your area, or if you do not have any swimmers on your team that compete regularly. Masters meets are rather unique. When you attend one, you will discover that they are not like age-group meets, college meets, or anything that you see on television. You can then better encourage swimmers to try a meet or two, if you believe that it will help reach their goals. Plus, you discover that, when you do get the chance to coach at a meet, you can not coach your Masters at a meet like you would coach your age-groupers and college swimmers.



The best way to encourage your swimmers to participate in a Masters meet is to host one. Witnessing a Masters meet will give you valuable information about how meets are run. Swimmers who have never participated in a meet are much less willing (perhaps afraid) to go to an unfamiliar pool for their first ever meet. Even if you do not have the facility or help needed to run a big meet, you can still have a small team scrimmage, a time trial, or a postal swim. Some Masters who do not have the capacity to travel to meets appreciate the opportunity to still compete at their home pool.

The subject of Masters meets and competitions was extensively discussed at the 1998 USMS Convention, with a special focus on ways of inspiring more members, regardless of ability, to participate. It was mentioned over and over that the coach had a huge influence as to whether a swimmer is competitive. Offering competitive opportunities in practice can encourage your swimmers to try other competitions. Going to those competitions with your swimmers is very supportive and tells them "We are in this together!"

# MAKING THE BEST

## DEVELOP "COACH OF THE YEAR" QUALITIES

Masters coaches are able to set professional goals by learning about recognition programs such as the USMS Coach of the Year. Here is a list of criteria upon which USMS Coach of the Year nominees are judged. Again, there is no one formula for coaching success that applies to everyone, but you will be very successful in coaching if you are doing well in the following areas:

- ACCOMPLISHMENTS - Club size and growth; Results of your swimmers at events such as the USMS Nationals, zone meets, and open water swims; Records and USMS Top Ten placings by your swimmers
- PUBLICATIONS - Articles and material published
- CONTRIBUTIONS TO USMS - Swim meets hosted; Clinics and presentations hosted; Positions held within the Local Masters Swimming Committee
- LONG TERM CONTRIBUTIONS - Years as a coach; Special accomplishments

The USMS Coaches Committee selects the USMS Coach of the Year, as always, from a deserving list of candidates. Do you think that you are a potential Coach of the Year? You can access the USMS website for a nomination form, or ask the Coaches Committee about it.

## (LAST, BUT CERTAINLY NOT LEAST) LEADERSHIP

The most successful coaches are leaders. If you are like most coaches, you probably did not grow up as a child and leave for college intending someday to be a coach. New coaches draw from their education (regardless of the type of degree) and experiences (including past swimming experiences) the concepts that apply to coaching. Leadership is the most important of these concepts. Leadership may come more naturally to some people than others, however leadership is a concept that is learned, not endowed or preordained.

Face it, the challenge in Masters coaching is exercising good leadership...convincing a group of fellow adults to spend an hour or so in strenuous physical exercise, and then convincing them to come back and do it again. All of the tips mentioned in this article are tools that a coach can use to exercise positive leadership.

## FINAL THOUGHTS ABOUT COACHING MASTERS

(Courtesy of the BC Masters Swimmers)

- Masters coaching is one of the most challenging but rewarding coaching jobs going
- Masters recognize no age limits

- Masters are eager to learn anything to do with their health and fitness
- Masters appreciate knowing why they are being asked to do something
- Masters respond to challenges
- Masters can make incredible performance gains through improved techniques
- Masters Swimming is all about Fun, Fitness, Friendship and Participation

## SOME SUGGESTED RESOURCES

**USMS WEBSITE** (<http://www.usms.org>)

### USMS COMMITTEES

The USMS Coaches, Fitness, and Safety Education Committees are available to serve USMS members, clubs, and LMSCs in promoting the goals of the Masters Swimming program. Committees are listed in the USMS Rule Book, and information is available on the USMS web site.

### USMS NATIONAL OFFICE

For information about USMS, its programs, services, and products, contact USMS Executive Secretary Traci Grilli at USMS National Office, P.O. Box 185, Londonderry NH 03053-0185, telephone (603) 537-0203, fax (603) 537-0204, and e-mail [usms@usms.org](mailto:usms@usms.org).

### SWIM MAGAZINE AND SWIMMING TECHNIQUE

For more information, contact their editorial offices at Sports Publications Inc., P.O. Box 20337, Sedona AZ 86341, telephone (520) 284-4005, or e-mail [SwimWorld@aol.com](mailto:SwimWorld@aol.com).

### FITNESS SWIMMER MAGAZINE

For more information, call (212) 573-0376 or write to Rodale Press Inc., 733 Third Ave., 15<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York NY 10017, or e-mail [marybswim@aol.com](mailto:marybswim@aol.com).

### AMERICAN SWIMMING COACHES ASSOCIATION

For information, contact ASCA through their website ([lornet.com/asca](http://lornet.com/asca)), telephone (800) 356-2722, or write to ASCA, 2101 N. Andrews Ave., Suite 107, Fort Lauderdale FL 33311.

### HINTS FOR COACHING MASTERS

Canadian Masters Swimming coaches have teamed-up to write "Hints for Coaching Masters" (3rd edition). It can be found on the Masters Swimming Canada web page ([www.compusmart.ab.ca/masterssc](http://www.compusmart.ab.ca/masterssc)).





## Masters Aquatic Coaches Association

### Membership Application and Renewal

The Masters Aquatic Coaches Association (MACA) is a service organization based on a central theme of  
**COMMUNICATION - EDUCATION - PROFESSIONALISM - PROMOTION**

We provide leadership to Masters swim coaches at all levels. We are dedicated to creating and enhancing progressive and highly visible programs that are effective in strengthening and improving the profession of Masters Coaching.

### Member Benefits:

\*The MACA Newsletter

\*Access to a network of Masters Swim Coaches

\*Schools and Clinics around the United States

\*Opportunity to have a voice in the future of your profession!

## ANNUAL DUES \$20

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