



SPM NEWSLETTER

St. Petersburg Masters | North Shore Aquatic Complex

Spring Has Sprung!

While this issue technically covers events between January and March 2025, I snuck in some USMS and USA Open Water news from the beginning of April as well. We all know that our team is always on the go. As I try to wrap up this issue, Chris Stickle, Kern Davis, and Alison Hayden are making more news at the USMS Spring Nationals, and many of our teammates are participating in the St. Anthony's Triathlon this same weekend.

Juggling schedules seemed to be the name of the game this quarter. The Tampa Bay Frogman Swim cancelled the swim out of concern for the safety of its participants, but the funds were still raised to support the fallen Navy Seals and their families. Good Life Games meet director, Mike Smith, ran a wonderfully successful event just ahead of the temporary closure of the Long Center. The Rowdy Gaines Classic was postponed until this January, and a small group of our teammates showed what teamwork is all about. Our board scrambled to find a venue for the awards banquet, normally held at Bayfront Towers, to the Yacht Club in anticipation of repair/construction work at the Towers. We all appreciate the 'behind-the-scenes' work our members do to keep everything running smoothly.

Many heartfelt experiences are shared in this issue too. Sarah Swoch describes swimming for the 'joy of it' in her inspiring swim around Anna Maria Island. Cheerleader Charlotte Petersen recounts the excitement of the Hansen OW wins in Sarasota as well as Katie Ledecky's visit to NSAC.

We were deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Pat Marzulli, a longtime team member and dear friend, on April 1. The outpouring of condolences has been a testament to the many lives he touched. Several of these tributes are included in this newsletter.

As always, many thanks to article and photo contributors: Gary Bastie, Leo Briceno, Martine Marzulli, Charlotte Petersen, Kathy Selles, Gloria Smith, Sarah Swoch, Paula Texel, and Karen Westerman. Please send your activities, photos, kudos for a teammate, and experiences you want to share, to me at livia.zien@gmail.com. The next issue will cover April through June.

Swim happy, everyone!

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Upcoming Pool Events

May 8-11 / SCY: YMCA Masters Nationals. Orlando FL. MUST BE A Y MEMBER BY APRIL 10 TO ENTER. [Information & online entry](#). Entry deadline: online entry closes Thursday, April 24. USMS-recognized

May 31- June 5 / SCM: IGLA. Washington DC. [Information & online entry](#). Entry deadline: April 30. USMS-recognized

June 7-8 / LCM: Bumpy Jones Classic. Sarasota FL [Information & online entry](#). Entry deadline: online entry closes Monday, June 2

July 12-13 / LCM: SPM Long Course Championships, St. Petersburg FL

July 25-28 / SCY: National Senior Games. Des Moines IA. [Information & entry](#). Entry deadline: online and paper entry closes Thursday, May 15. Senior meet for 50+. Will be USMS-recognized

Aug. 2 / LCM: Dog Days of Summer. Augusta GA.

Aug. 6-10 / LCM: USMS Summer Nationals. Federal Way WA.



President's Corner

by Kathy Selles

I hope this newsletter finds you bringing your life back together after Hurricanes Helene and Milton. Did you hear that those two names have been permanently retired? Yes, Helene and Milton, along with Beryl, have been retired from the list of potential Atlantic hurricane names. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) retired these names following the deadly and destructive 2024 hurricane season. These storms caused widespread devastation across the Caribbean, the United States, and Mexico. Let's hope for a much quieter hurricane season.

The board added two new members: Stephanie Gibson and Cameron Chambers. Both have been active with the team and participating in meets. This brings the board up to a full complement of nine members.

Reservations for the SPM awards banquet were submitted in November, however we learned in December that Bayfront Tower would not be available due to restoration work on the building. After an extensive search for an affordable location, we settled on the St Pete Yacht Club. They were excellent to work with and provided a sit-down dinner with three delicious menu choices. This arrangement allowed the Board members to focus on the evening's program and participate in the fun. We presented All American and Top Ten awards, we and enjoyed poking fun and our teammates with the Georgie awards.

Our focus over the next few months will be the search for a new Masters coach. We know of two individuals in the area who may be interested. A job description is being developed, and we will be advertising on various swimming sites. We appreciate the many responses to our survey which asked, "What are you looking for in a masters coach?" Fifty of you responded and gave thoughtful responses which will be used in the job description and during the selection process.

Be sure to check the newsletter, website, and Facebook page for upcoming events such as the 5k and 10k: June 29, August 17, and September 14. The SPM LCM meet is July 12 and 13. Volunteers, please mark your calendar. Your response to our calls for volunteers has been awesome! Thank you for all you do.



Coach's Corner

Limits, Barriers, and Obstacles

It's been said that, unless we learn from our past, we're doomed to repeat it. And, with swimming, nothing could be more truthful. You see, what were thought to be limits, barriers, and obstacles, ended up being nothing more than figments of our imagination. Yet, if we'd given them the credence they demanded at the time, the sport of swimming would have long since stagnated and what was seen as a limit, barrier, or an obstacle, would have become a monument.

Take limits. They're self-imposed when it comes to swimming. In fact, the very times Tarzan, aka, Jonny Weissmuller swam, were seen as the best one could do. Yet today, high school girls routinely swim faster times.

Then, there are imaginary barriers. One's the "minute". In the past breaking a minute (you name the stroke) was seen as either impossible or quite an accomplishment, depending on one's ability. For instance, if you broke a minute in a 100 free, you were pretty fast but, breaking a minute in a 100 breaststroke was unheard of and thought to be impossible.

Then there are obstacles. And obstacles are nothing more than opportunities, just waiting for us to use as we vault past them. I mean, who ever thought women would be swimming 46 seconds for a 100 fly or 44 seconds for a 100 free? And, whoever thought 11-12 yr. old kids could swim as fast as Olympians in the not do distant past?

It's only when we put limits, barriers, and obstacles in their proper place, that we ourselves will see beyond them. But, if we do, we'll not only succeed, we'll move the goal posts to new heights. And, when it comes to Masters' swimming, either we limit ourselves with imaginary barriers and obstacles or we overcome and use them to further what we're able to do. I'll explain in the next article.

Moving Beyond Limits, Barriers, and Obstacles

If we want to move ahead with our swimming, then there are a few things to keep in mind. First, who says we have to get worse and worse as we age? While we might get slower, why get worse? "Worse" is a self-imposed state where we expect nothing from ourselves and that's what we get.

Take swimming a 50 or 100 free. Those events used to be swum about 99% atop the water while today, that's no longer the case due to underwater dolphin kicking. If you watch the latest 50 or 100 swimmers at NCAA's (on swimswam's website), you'll see how much of the race is now underwater. Why? We can push off and dolphin kick faster than we can swim so...

As for distance events, certain barriers have been removed—like how fast a person can swim and for how long. A great example is Leon Marchand. When He swam a 4:02 for his 500, not only did he hold his 100 times much faster, he also kicked underwater for half each length—something unheard of just a couple of years previously. In doing so, Marchand opened the door to others doing the same thing. Regardless of our previous times, we can swim faster.

Each Friday afternoon, I use "Fast Friday" workouts. That's where the yardage is around 2000 yd. or even less but, where swimmers get to sprint and move the needle for their routine speed towards a much faster pace. Since it's weekly, swimmers get at least 50 times per year to practice race pace swimming. In the process, I've seen our swimmers, regardless of age, get faster, swim beyond any limits placed on them, and overcome barriers and obstacles in the process. As a result, times continue to drop for all age groups.

With this in mind, the next time you practice, why not concentrate on just one set at a time. Get what you want out of it by putting in what's required to make you better. If you do, you'll never be disappointed because we always get out of life what we put into it.

Pool Competitions

Good Life Games

by Paula Texel

Hats off to our very own Mike Smith, who orchestrated an outstanding Good Life Games meet back in January that saw nine St.



Good Life Gang (photo: St. Pete Masters)



The medals! (photo: M. Smith)

Pete Masters swimmers (who are 50+) tackle some long course swimming. This meet was held at the Long Center, one of the last meets held there before shutting its doors for renovations. Mike had recently taken the role of Executive Director for the Good Life Games of Pinellas County, and he jumped right into planning for this meet. As he stated, he is "passionate about people living their best lives and fitness plays a significant role." I know for me the past year or so has been about just keeping my fitness going even through new job responsibilities and the never-ending colds I seem to have caught over the past year.

I have to say - the hot topic of conversation at the meet was the medals! Mike and his team truly outdid themselves with designing an AWESOME medal for the winners and many were strategizing how they could get their hands on one of the prized possessions. For those of you turning 50 next year – we hope you will join us!

Results can be found here: <https://midnightsports.com/2025/20250111GoodLife/Results.pdf>

St. Pete Masters Make a Splash at the Rescheduled Rowdy Gaines Masters Classic

by Sarah Swoch

After being postponed due to hurricanes last fall, the Rowdy Gaines Masters Classic finally took place January 31–February 2,



A winning combo (photo: S.Swoch)



(photo: S.Swoch)



Hardware (photo: S.Swoch)

2025, at the Rosen Aquatic Center in Orlando. St. Pete Masters came in with a lean crew of just nine swimmers—but what we lacked in numbers, we made up for in heart, hustle, and some seriously fast swims.

The Rowdy Gaines meet is often won in the relays, and while our small team size kept us out of overall team contention, we packed a punch in every event we entered. We pulled together every combination we could and came away with **five first-place relays**—each worth a valuable 40 points. (The editor would like to note that the “Chris, Cam, Alison, and Sarah relay” won the 160-199 400 Mixed Free, 800 Mixed Free, and 400 Mixed IM Relays.)



(photo: S.Swoch)



(photo: K. Westerman)

Our swimmers didn’t just show up—they showed out. We left the meet with **fistfuls of medals** and even a few **high point awards**, proving that quality can rival quantity when it comes to making an impact.

Results can be found here: <http://www.southeastzone.org/Results/2502orlando.pdf>

Bob Beach Championships Meet

The longest continuously running Masters meet was held on the weekend of March 15-16. North Shore Aquatic Center welcomed 110 swimmers representing 24 teams to the Annual SCY Bob Beach Championship Meet. Thirty of our teammates participated, and many doubled as timers as well.

This meet marked the first USMS meet for Andrea Bruno who earned high point in her age group and won both her 50 yd free and 100yd IM events. Judge Beach, our meet’s namesake and at the top of his age group, swam a few events and was cheered on by family.

These meets are a result of the hard work of Meet Director Brooke Bowman, and all the volunteers and officials. Timers are always needed, and when short, swimmers often pitch in. Sarah Swoch comments, “If only we had a picture of the superman-style transformation of Howard from timer to relay swimmer.” Many thanks to Sarah for capturing so many photos, while racking up the points in all her events too!



High point winners were

30-34 Women – Andrea Bruno
 30-34 Men – Cam Chambers
 35-39 Women – Sarah Swoch
 50-54 Women – Alison Hayden
 50-54 Men – Eric Herman
 55-59 Women – Karen Westerman

60-64 Women – Cheryl Kupan
 60-65 Men – Jeff Gould
 70-74 Women - Nancy Kiernan
 70-74 Men - Kern Davis
 90-94 Men – Bob Beach

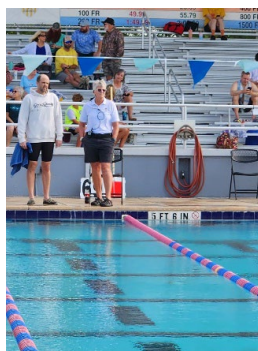
Congratulations to all who participated! Results can be found at:

<https://midnightsports.com/2025/20250315spm/Results.pdf>





Many thanks to our volunteers (photo: S.Swoch)



Many thanks to ur officials Kevin, Joannie, Steve, and Mike (photo: S.Swoch)



Capital City Senior Games
(photo: K. Westerman)



Polk Senior Games (photo: K. Westerman)

Meet Round-up

In other meets, Courtney Chubb participated in the Gulf Coast Senior Games on February 8 in Sarasota by winning her 100 yd and 500 yd freestyle events. On March 1, Karen Westerman, sporting her new tie-dye swim cap, broke the 55-59 Women's 200 yd freestyle record at the Polk Senior Games with a time of 2:16.59. Karen continued to break records at the Capital City Senior Games Swim Meet in Tallahassee on March 13. Swimming 6 events, she set new records in 100 yd butterfly, 100 and 200 yd backstroke, 100, 200, and 500

yd freestyle events. Not to be outdone, Mike Smith won all his events, breaking records in the 50 yd freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly events. On March 22, Chris Stickle traveled up to Williamsburg, VA to swim in the Katie Grauman Grier Club Tribe Masters Classic, winning the 50 and 1000 yd freestyle, 50 yd butterfly and breaststroke, and placing 2nd in the 50 yd backstroke. Nice to see our teammates representing us so well around Florida and beyond!

1-Hour Virtual Championship

The ten women and eight men placed 5th for the Women's and 4th in the Men's small club division (1-15 swimmers). Cam Chambers and Courtney Chubb led the team with 5440 and 4830 yards each, earning individual All-Americans! Six individual Top Ten finishes went to Valerie Valle, Karen Westerman, Geraldine Jacobson, Chris Stickle, Sean Gerrard, and Kern Davis. Two relays, the men's 35+ (Cam, Chris, and Sean) and the mixed 35+ (Cam, Chris, Sarah, and Karen) earned All-Americans. Five additional relays finished in the Top Ten:

Women's 25+ Macarena, Sarah, Dawn - 9th
 Women's 45+ Valerie, Karen, Courtney - 4th
 Men's 55+ Jim, Steve, Kern - 5th
 Mixed 45+ Valerie, Sean, Courtney, Kern - 2nd
 Mixed 55+ Jim, Dawn, Melissa, Steve - 7th



All-American Courtney throws down the gauntlet with her hour swim before team day with cheerleader and counter, Ali (photo: C. Chubb)

More kudos to the deep bench: Macarena Martin Mayor, Sarah Swoch, Dawn Clark, Jennifer Burns, Melissa Harasz, Kathy Selles, Andrew Leone, Jim Esposito, and Steve Freeman. Remember, team dates for the 5k and 10k Postals will take place on June 29, August 17, and September 14. Keep a lookout for signups in your email and on our Facebook page.

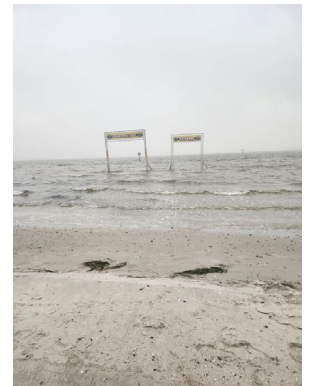
Open Water Swimming

Tampa Bay Frogman

Swimmers Kern Davis, Dawn Clark, and Andrew Leone, and kayakers Kathy Selles and Sarah Swoch were prepared to participate in the 16th Annual Tampa Bay Frogman Swim on the morning of January 19. However, Mother Nature did not cooperate, and the swim was cancelled for safety reasons. Nevertheless, the funds were still raised to support and honor the fallen Navy Seals and Gold Star families.



Kern, Dawn, Andrew (photo: S. Swoch)



(photo: K. Selles)

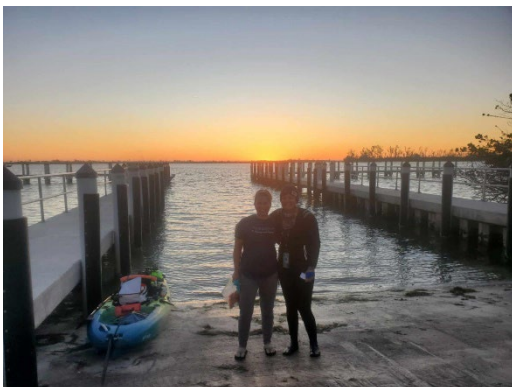
General Registration for next year's event will open on August 6 at 7am ET and is expected to sell out in less than 10 minutes. Charity registration (\$2500) will open June 28. <https://tampabayfrogman.com/>

A Lap Around Paradise (With a Side of Sea Lice)

by Sarah Swoch

Some swims are about competition. Others are about the joy of movement, the beauty of the surroundings, and the satisfaction of silence. My 16-mile swim around Anna Maria Island was exactly that—a perfect day in the water, made even better by the people who helped make it happen.

It all started when my friend Shells was planning to kayak around the island in preparation for her own AMI swim. She was set to join Lynn and Ken for their swim the following Monday. Since she'd be out on



Sarah with Shelly Stewart (photo: (P. Valitutto))



Pure joy (photo: P. Valitutto)

30 minutes, and keeping the vibe warm and easy. With one kayak on either side, I was nestled in my own little swimmer sandwich—and I couldn't have been happier.

The swim was everything I'd hoped it would be. The water on the beach side was mostly clear, with sunlight filtering through the turquoise water. Even the sea lice that somehow made their way into my suit couldn't dull the beauty of the coastline. On the backside of the island, seagrass beds stretched out below, with tiny sea creatures darting through their green world.

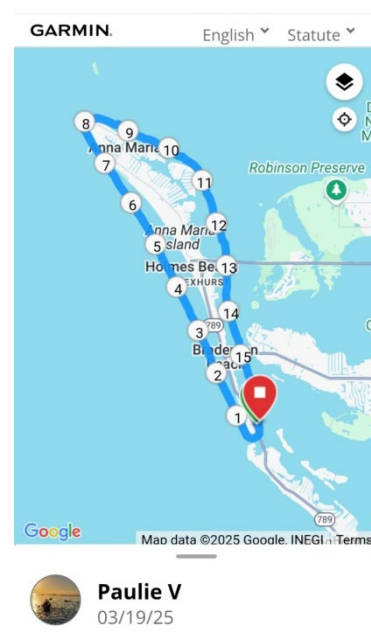
The planned route had me zipping smoothly around both ends of the island. The only "tough" section—if you can call it that—came on the back side, where the chop made breathing a bit tricky. One breath would be clean, the next a wave to the face. But that's the nature of a circumnavigation: conditions shift. And eventually, they did.

As I passed the final bridge and docks, waved at a sightseeing boat, and cruised into the boat ramp—where the Coast Guard just happened to be posted up—I was grinning from ear to ear. A blue sky, warm sun, smiling kayakers, and miles of sparkling 66 degree water. I couldn't have asked for a better swim. Well... maybe one without the sea lice stowaways. But even they couldn't ruin the day.

It was the kind of swim that reminds you why we do this—not for medals, but for days like this. For the calm. For the adventure. For the company. For the pure joy of it all.

the water anyway, she offered to support me from the kayak if I wanted to swim on Wednesday of my spring break. Weekday swims usually don't fit into my schedule, but with the rare gift of a free day, I happily said yes.

There's something uniquely freeing about swimming close to home. No flights, no logistics, no race-day nerves—just a stretch of ocean and the time to enjoy it. For eight hours and six minutes, I got to do exactly what I love: swim. Shells and Paulie V. were there the whole time, fending off boat traffic, feeding me every



Started 7:52 AM EST • Ended 3:59 PM EST

USMS Open Water Nationals



SPMers hit the Open Water (photo: S. Swoch)

On April 4 and 5, a large contingent of SPM swimmers headed to Sarasota's Nathan Benderson Park to participate in the 2025 USMS Sprint-Distance and Long-Distance Open Water National Championships. This National team sported a muscle-bound pelican t-shirt design and was ready to show their strength!

Some were OWS regulars while others were testing 'new waters', so to speak. We had several All-Americans including Macarena Martin Mayor, Cam Chambers, and Alison Hayden in the 5K, and Courtney Chubb in the 1-mile event. Every single SPM participant placed in the top ten. Several swimmers were even captured in pictures on the USMS Facebook page as well.

Congratulations to all participants!

The results are below:

1 Mile Finishes – Friday, April 4

- 40-44 Stephanie Gibson 0:23:27 – 3rd
- 40-44 Sarah Swoch 0:25:27 – 5th
- 45-49 Valerie Valle 0:22:50 – 2nd
- 55-59 Courtney Chubb 0:22:22 – 1st
- 55-59 Karen Westerman 0:23:42 – 3rd
- 55-59 Paula Texel 0:23:49 – 4th
- 60-64 Dawn Clark 0:29:22 – 6th
- 65-69 Sharon Steinmann 0:28:44 – 6th
- 65-69 Susan Tokayer 0:29:13 – 7th
- 70-74 Kern Davis 0:24:02 – 2nd

5K Finishes – Saturday, April 5

- 25-29 Macarena Martin Mayor 1:22:53 – 1st
- 35-39 Cameron Chambers 1:08:23 – 1st
- 40-44 Stephanie Gibson 1:23:01 – 3rd
- 40-44 Sarah Swoch 1:32:19 – 6th
- 40-44 Jesse Morenus 1:30:55 – 3rd
- 50-54 Alison Hayden 1:17:44 – 1st
- 50-54 Suzanne Dearworth 1:25:04 – 3rd
- 50-54 Nathan Dean 1:34:04 – 4th
- 55-59 Karen Westerman 1:29:38 – 4th
- 65-69 Susan Tokayer 1:49:06 – 5th
- 70-74 Kern Davis 1:27:23 – 2nd



(photo: S. Swoch)



(photo: S. Gibson)



(photo: USMS)



(photo: S. Swoch)



Paula's OWS debut (photo: USMS)

Upcoming Open Water Events

May 10: Swim Across America-Tampa, St. Petersburg, FL. [Information & registration](#) USMS sanctioned: NO

May 17: Beaufort River Swim (1-mile, 3.2-miles). Beaufort SC. [Information & registration](#). USMS sanctioned: NO

May 24: Lowcountry Splash (2.4-mile, 6-mile). Charleston SC. [Information & registration](#). USMS sanctioned: NO

May 31: Southeast Zone Open Water Championship/Bussell Island Swim (1-mile, 2.6K, 5.2K). Lenoir City TN. [Information & registration](#). USMS sanctioned: YES

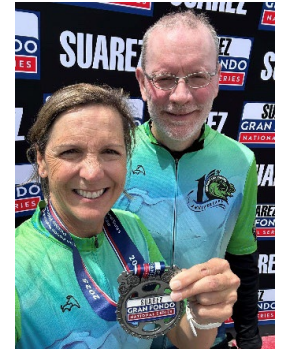
Sept. 13: Swim for Alligator Lighthouse (8-miles). Islamorada FL. [Information & registration](#). USMS sanctioned: NO

Outside the Lanes

On March 23, Karen and Russ Westerman rode the challenging hills of Dade City in the Gran Fondo Florida bike race. Their 35.2-mile piccolo course had over 1500 feet of elevation change. One week later, Russ found himself on the podium placing 3rd in the 50-mile Florida Gravel Grinder race at the Chassahowitzka River. Congratulations to the Westermans!



Florida Gravel Grinder (photo: K. Westerman)



Gran Fondo (photo: K. Westerman)

Celebrity Afternoon

by Charlotte Petersen



Just a casual afternoon at my "other home" (photo: C. Petersen)

Late January, Chelsea told me that we would most likely have a very famous swimmer coming to NSAC in route to an event in Naples. She didn't have all the details, but I am almost always off on Mondays, so I was very excited. Once again, we didn't know all the details but heard that it would be in the afternoon. Chelsea and I met at 2:30 in the parking lot and as soon as we walked in, we could see this famous freestyle in the middle of the pool. I brought the book she wrote and a fully charged phone for pictures. Chelsea changed and then we went over to see Katie Ledecky. This was the second time in just a few weeks that she came to our pool. Chelsea put fins on and joined Katie's workout. For a swim nerd like myself, this was pure adrenaline to see how she pushes every lap and every set including the 3 x 1000 on 11 min. I timed them and called out splits. I was corrected once by KL. Guess I was slow to look up. The 2 swimmers chatted about the sets, life, college swimming, friends and coaches. I wanted to know about Bobby and other Gators. She talked about her nickname, "the boys," what she was doing after her practice and that she was returning Tuesday and

wanted to do towers. KL is extremely gracious with her time and let us talk, ask questions, take pictures and then she signed the book. I mentioned a swimmer in her book that she herself thanked. This "swammer" happens to be the Danish distance swimmer who broke my last Danish record in the 1500m. Katie then took a picture of the two of us and sent it to Lotte Friis in Denmark. Small world.

When she was racing at North Shore Aquatic Center two weeks prior to her casual visit, she swam with both Sawyer and Brinkleigh. They both came to say hi and she invited them to swim with her.

Katie was on her way to an event with a sponsor, and I happened to tell her to drive carefully down I-75. She said she had a driver. LOL! She said she would be back Tuesday and what time. Chelsea was able to swim with her the next day and was just as "high" as I was after our meeting with KL. Now we can take credit for Katie getting in shape for trials this Summer where she hopefully will be TEAM USA teammates with 2 SPA kids- Bobby and Brinkleigh.

It was such a fun afternoon for me and what was even more remarkable was that the swimmers in the lanes surrounding her in the afternoon appeared to have no clue as to whom they were swimming next to. The lifeguard tried to tell me that public swimming was over at 4 PM and the lady at the front register was told not to charge her.

KL is welcome to swim at NSAC any time, any day. What a fun afternoon for us.

I should mention that Katie Ledecky sent a personal congratulations to Brinkleigh after her OW victory and per Rebecca, Brinkleigh's answer was "OMG, OMG"



Brinkleigh Hansen wins the 5k and 10k OW Nationals (photo: USA Swimming)

Hansen 1-2-3

by Charlotte Petersen

Remember the success SPA had last year at OW Nationals where Brinkleigh Hansen and Cobe Hehenberger both claimed gold in the 5 K and Brinkleigh went on to gold at World Junior OW championships in Italy? Well, this year even more focus was placed on sending SPA kids to Nationals once again, this time in Sarasota. SPA sent 12 or 13 swimmers divided into JR 14-15 and JR 16-17 age groups. The week leading up to this fun event, I learned that Brinkleigh was going for the 10K senior Friday and 7.5K junior Sunday.

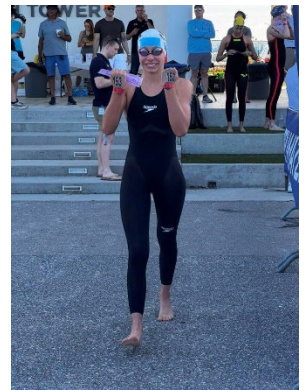
I had taken the weekend off so I could watch SPM as well as SPA kids concur the pond. What a venue they have only 48 minutes away with normal traffic and 90 minutes home on a Friday afternoon, early evening.

Friday AM, women's 10K went off as all the other events with a water start. Big guns entered including Olympians and Olympic medalists. With a late scratch from Katie Grimes, I still figured it would be a Claire Weinstein show with perhaps Becca Mann, and Mariah Denigan right behind. There were college swimmers, Japanese nationals, as well as Canadians. 5 loops of 2 K. Fred has told his kids to take it out and not rely on drafting. He told the same to Cam, Chelsea, and in the past Bobby Finke.

Brinkleigh started out in top 5-6 and as I walked back and forth the home stretch side of the 800 plus meter (plus), I was witness to the brutal contact sport OWS can be. I saw a Japanese swimmer kick her in the face and later told me that some 27-year-old swimmer was mean to her in the water as well. Brinkleigh had to stop and fix her goggles more than once. The feeding station was another contact sport, and many wore bright yellow for the swimmer to spot but with so many yellows, how do you spot your dad? She had been warned that Claire Weinstein would have nutrition on loop 3 and 4 but to follow her in what she did. "What Claire does, so does Brinkleigh." Fred told me that Claire would trick the competition on the last lap, and she did. She tricked them and swam towards the pontoon but then cut out again. Brinkleigh missed the trick, but Mariah Denigan did not, so it became a mad dash to the finish.

Brinkleigh had been top 5-6 the entire way but inched her way up many times and the last 800 meters became a sprint. Denigan, Weinstein, and on the inside Brinkleigh Hansen 15.5 years of age from SPA. We were cheering and screaming like mad people and the last 3 min 10 sec I was able to film. Wow, she did what she did last year, smoke them down the stretch. Claire was gracious in defeat and asked her where it came from? Brinkleigh stated she had more in the tank.

As a national champion, Brinkleigh has qualified for OW World Championship in Singapore in July. She will swim 10K, 5K, and perhaps a relay or the knockout. She pulled out of the 7.5K as she was very sore and had nothing to prove.



Brinkleigh Hansen is ready (photo: C. Petersen)



Sawyer Hansen wins silver in the 5k Jr OW Nationals (photo: C. Petersen)

Saturday AM, the junior boys 14-15 years swam the 5K. This time Sawyer Hansen was competing (as well as 3 other SPA kids). Sawyer is not quite 14 but what he lacks in height, he has in guts, determination, as well as work ethic. Once again, "take it out and see who follows". I had brought my bike down on Saturday and could see the entire race from both sides. 3 loops for the 5K. Sawyer swam it so smartly and with the wind and much larger boys, he swam on the outside and was in the top 5 the entire event. He was 3rd at the start of the 3rd loop but the leader was too far ahead. Number 2 is a familiar name as well. Joey Eaddy is a tall fast miler who has trained with SPA during many visits to his grandmother Nancy (a former SPA member) and Joey's dad (Jason) swam for Fred as a fast age-grouper. Sawyer and Joey were side by side on the last loop until roughly 1200-1500 m to go when Sawyer said, "see you." It was amazing how he left Joey and with every breath/spotting, he was looking for the leader. The overall winner was too far

ahead even with Sawyer's closing speed but a silver medal at Junior Nationals is amazing. Sawyer stated that he has another year in this age group and will win it next year.

I was not able to go down Sunday, so I was watching the live stream and texting with Rebecca. The eldest Hansen girl, Karrington, soon to be a senior at SPSHS and future Kentucky Wild Cat, swam the 7.5K for 16-17-year-old. As I was listening to the live feed, I was texting with Rebecca. The wind had picked up, as predicted, and the conditions were worse than the previous 2 days. The water temperature was no longer the 77°F it was Friday AM. However, Karrington was motivated and had experience from last year on the same distance, so she swam a great event and despite being 6-7 or as her mom said, "far behind", she came back on the last loop and got an impressive bronze medal.

How amazing it is for our swimming family to go "Hansen 1-2-3" at the National OW and the youngest competing at Florida OW Championship on Sunday in Ft Myers. Congratulations to everyone. It was an incredible performance, and I could talk about this forever.

SPM Awards Banquet

This year, the Annual Awards banquet was held at the St. Pete Yacht Club, since our traditional Bayfront Towers was anticipating renovations. The event was well-attended featuring entree choices of salmon, beef short rib, and vegetarian. The banquet is always a wonderful way to spend time with teammates, reflect on the year's achievements, and share experiences.

In addition to recognizing all the individual and relay All-American and Top Ten accomplishments, the team had some fun giving out "Georgie Awards" named after our former coach George Bole. There are often fun stories behind the awards. For instance, President Kathy Selles was a double winner, receiving two pelican themed awards from Sarah Swoch and Mike Zabel, as the Pelican in Charge (PIC). Howard Cheung apparently had some last-minute close calls getting to his relay events warranting the "Just in Time Award." Sarah gave him this award for having to dash over after buying a chair and then again after getting locked out of his hotel room at the Rowdy Gaines meet. Russ Westerman won the award for the goofiest first SPM event, "The Long-Haul Rookie Award." Russ made his SPM debut swimming the 5K postal, which is equivalent to running a half-marathon, Sarah explains. Alison Hayden received some Pepto Bismol from Chris Stickle to alleviate pre-race stomach jitters. Maki received the "The Slippery Situation Award" because of frequent swim cap malfunctions. A wonderful time was had by all!



2025 Awards Banquet (photo: G. Smith)



Howard's Just in Time Award (photo: G. Smith)



Maki wins the Slippery Situation Award (photo: G. Smith)





Kathy gets PIC awards, Chris gives Alison an emergency supply of Pepto, and Russ' earns the Long-Haul Rookie Award (photo: G. Smith)

Remembering Pat Marzulli (1948-2025)

It is never easy to share sad news with the team. While Pat Marzulli left this world on April 1, his legacy lives on both in the swimming and in business worlds. In the water, he was best known for his achievements in open water and USMS postal swims. His powerful and steady presence earned him the Top Fundraiser award at the 10th Anniversary of the Frogman Tampa Bay swim in 2018. In 2018, just shy of his 70th birthday, (69 and 311 days) he became the oldest person to swim the 32.2km Catalina Channel. He crossed the channel in 15 hours and 29 minutes. His record remains intact. Other notable swims in his illustrious open water career include the Tampa Bay Marathon Swim, multiple Swim Around Key West events, Manhattan Island Marathon Swim, and the SCAR Challenge, among others. In the pool, he was a steadfast USMS postal swimmer and swam the distance free and breaststroke events at meets. His stories for this newsletter always encouraged others to share, hoping that his story might also inspire others to create their own experiences and stories.



Days before his 2018 Catalina Channel Swim (photo: M. Marzulli)



2019 10th Anniversary of Tampa Bay Frogman (photo: Tampa Bay Frogman)



Tampa Bay Frogman

As a colleague, he was admired and well-respected. In his honor, the Florida Gulf Coast Commercial Association of Realtors created the Pat Marzulli Leadership Award for his 30-year dedication to the profession and to the fellowship.

He and his wife Martine shared countless adventures for over 23 years, many of them revolving around Pat's open-water events. Back in October 2002, he proposed to her on their trip to the 7th Annual St. Croix Coral Reef Swim in St. Croix. Martine explains they spent almost every single day together since. "He ate the grapes, and I drank them. We were a team. We complemented each other."

Pat will be deeply missed, but he will be remembered with great respect, admiration, and affection by all who knew him — and he will continue to inspire us all.

An interview with Pat after his Catalina swim can be found [here](#): The outpouring of tributes is vast. A few are shared below:

Leo Briceno:

After two remarkable decades of friendship, countless miles swum together in open water, and countless memories made, Pat has always been a quiet force—an incredible open water swimmer, a dedicated postal swimmer, and a teammate who has inspired so many of us. His passion for swimming and his unwavering spirit have left an indelible mark on everyone who has had the privilege to know him.

While Pat has kept his journey private, I believe it's important to celebrate the light he has brought into our lives. He has been a pioneer in our open water swim community, showing us what it means to embrace challenges and push beyond our limits. His determination and resilience remind us all to cherish each stroke we take in life.

As we navigate this difficult time, let's honor Pat by reflecting on the joy he has shared with us and the countless lives he has touched. Let's continue to support each other and carry forward the inspiration he has given us all.

Thank you, Pat, for being a beacon of strength and perseverance. You are loved, and your legacy will continue to inspire many.

Nick DeVito, President of SIOR Florida Chapter:

It is with a heavy heart that I share the sad news of the passing of our friend and fellow SIOR member, Pat Marzulli. Pat fought a courageous battle with cancer, never once complaining despite the challenges he faced. He put up a brave fight, but in the end, it was something that he could not swim away from.

Pat's self-deprecating sense of humor, his happy-go-lucky attitude, and his genuine love for life and his beloved wife, Martine, made him truly special. He was always willing to lend a helping hand to those in need, and his positive spirit uplifted everyone around him. Pat was a friend to so many of us, and his legacy will remain in our hearts.

Pat, a lifelong resident of Pinellas County, held his Florida real estate license since 1975 and earned his Florida broker's license in 1982. In 1993, he was awarded the CCIM (Certified Commercial Investment Member) designation, and in 2000, he became an SIOR.

We will miss his presence, his kindness, and his unwavering optimism. Let us honor Pat's memory by reflecting on the joy he brought to our lives and the lessons he taught us about strength, resilience, and compassion.

Lisa Malick Hertz:

I'm devastated by the loss of our good friend, Pat Marzulli. Pattycakes was my first swim buddy when I rebranded myself as a marathon swimmer. I don't have a picture of JC from the day I met my future husband - I have a picture that day with Pat, both smiling goofy, because I'd just told him of my special encounter and we were flushed with excitement of another Frogman swim. So many stories. I could go on and on, as he was the kindest and most sincere "uncle" of marathon swimming. It was truly an honor, though, to help escort him across Catalina Channel for his record setting swim.

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