



SPM NEWSLETTER

St. Petersburg Masters | North Shore Aquatic Complex

In this Issue...

Summer Excitement	1
From Coach Gary: Swim Meets	2
President's Corner	3
Pool Competition	4
USMS Short Course Nationals	4
Good Life Games	5
SPM LCM Meet	6
Dog Days of Summer	7
Team 5k / 10k Postal	8
LCM Nationals Team	8
Open Water Swimming	8
Alligator Lighthouse	9
Gold Medalists Among Us	9
St. Pete Watch Party	10
Inspiration for 2022	12
More Tips from Coach Gary	13
Drill/Swim/Drill	13
Swim, Don't Slosh	13
Olympic Lessons	14
George Bole Scholarship	14
Wedding Bells	15

Summer Excitement

As meets regained some traction over the past few months, our members were excited and took advantage of their dedicated training during the ongoing pandemic. The postponed Short Course Nationals in Greensboro was the season's finale, where SPM, with a strong team of 11, had a banner season, quite literally and brought home 6th place in the local club category. With our own LCM meet in August and meets in Clearwater, we began to emerge and venture back into competition. The 8k Alligator Lighthouse swim provided a fun and challenging open water opportunity.



Cooler water (photo credit: S. Swoch)

We didn't have to look beyond our own backyard to be inspired. The Tokyo Olympics moved into full swing, and we were treated to some outstanding performances by athletes around the world, but our hometown heroes really gave us something to cheer about. The energetic and enthusiastic crowd gathered at NSAC to watch Bobby Finke win the men's 1500m event, his 2nd Gold of the Games! Brad Snyder, already a 5-time swimming Gold medalist in the Paralympic Games, brought home the first Gold medal in the triathlon event, ever won by an American in either the Olympics or Paralympics.

The George Bole Scholarship tradition continues, recognizing talented SPA student swimmers, and to top everything off, wedding bells were a-ringing for Tori Kirkman (Sigley) and Donnie!

Enjoy Coach Gary's good (and entertaining) advice, President Phil Harasz's team updates, and Regina Novak's insights.

Many thanks to those who contribute articles, photos, and ideas. A special thanks to Gary Bastie, Brooke Bowman, Tabitha Brandt, Sheila Carpenter Van-Dijk, Dawn Clark, Rebecca Hansen, Phil Harasz, Regina Novak, Charlotte Petersen, Sharon Steinmann, Sarah Swoch, and Sara Wolski. Please send any ideas for articles to livia.zien@gmail.com. Thanks!

Happy Swimming!

Upcoming Pool Meets

Oct. 15-17 / SCM: Rowdy Gaines Classic. Orlando FL. [Information & entry](#). *Entry deadline: online entry closes Monday, October 11*

Nov. 6-7 / SCY: The Villages Senior Games. The Villages FL. [Information & entry](#) (paper entries only). *Entry deadline: received by Friday, October 29. Senior games for ages 50+. USMS-recognized*

Nov. 13-14 / SCM: Shark Tank Meet. Sarasota FL. [Information & entry](#). *Entry deadline: online entry closes Wednesday, November 10*

Dec. 11-12 / SCY: Florida State Senior Games. Coral Springs FL. *Senior games for ages 50+. Will be USMS-recognized*

From Coach Gary: Swim Meets

By Gary Bastie

Someone once asked me why swim in meets. Isn't practice good enough? Well, yes and no. For example, if you feel you're getting "flat", bored, and need something to spice up your swimming, why not try a swim meet or e-postal swim? It will help you see what you need to work on and also show you what you HAVE done to be more successful in achieving your goals.

Speaking of goals, meets can help you have actual goals. If you sign up, they want a "seed time". That's not the time it takes to get a seed to sprout, it's the time you've swum recently or expect to swim. Except for some among us who will go unnamed, most of us seed rather realistically and the times we put down are goal times. Either we repeat or exceed them. If not, we learn what to work on for next time.

Another reason is simple. It's called "team". As part of a club or team, we have a few things to think about. One's that we swim for fitness. Another is the social aspect and yet another, is to help the team.

Take SPM. It's a team comprised of various levels of fitness, ability, experience, and ages. Within the club people swim for fitness, to get in shape for a triathlon, to look better and fit our clothing, to be able to eat more of our favorite foods, to impress our non-swimming friends, to be "different", because we like it, because it makes us shower more often, because there's nothing better to do at 5:30 a.m., or because we enjoy the atmosphere and all that surrounds us in a pool setting. To me, that shouts of "Hey, swim a meet, will ya!?"

By swimming in a meet, your weaknesses will be exposed and your strengths highlighted. That makes each practice more meaningful.

And, here's one I've used in the past. If you, as a 15 year old, could have seen yourself today at an SPM practice or meet, I'll bet you dollars to donuts that you'd be very proud of your older self. Most of us have exceeded all expectations when it comes to our swimming life.

Since we're all in this together, swim meets are where we go to show that we're all human. No one's laughing at you (at least not so you can hear it). Instead, we're with you in that we all get gassed, especially in front of all of our friends, and it's usually before the end of the race. So, why not enjoy making everyone laugh as you swim a timed interval that means nothing to global affairs? Heck, it sure beats the alternative.

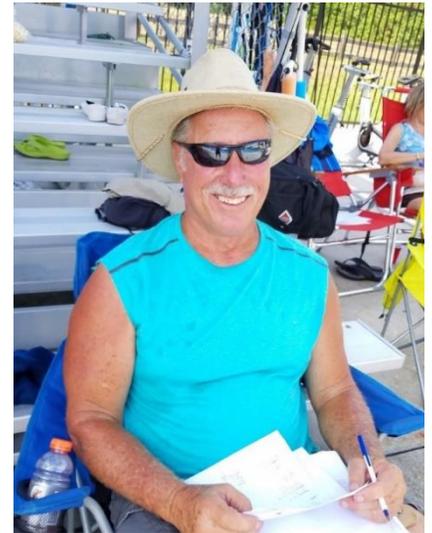
Not only that, by swimming in meets, we really get to enjoy ourselves...for a change. With family, job, and other responsibilities, it's sort of nice to sit back and concentrate on your own race for a change. And, with all your teammates supporting you, meets bring teams closer together.

Just think, what if there were no meets, timed events, or any other reason to swim, Life would be dull and meaningless in many instances. But, we need not go there because there are meets for one and all. And, if you think you're not fast enough, that's just an excuse. Think about it. Someone HAS to be last and someone's going to win. If you're in there somewhere, you're within the curve of mankind. And, if you ask me, swimming in a meet is like a pyramid. At the top, there's a pinpoint of those who do. The rest of the pyramid represents mankind—those who never could, did, or can. But, not you.

I'll end with this. I had a friend named Bill, who contracted polio. He was trapped in an iron lung 24/7 for the remainder of his life. To me, I owed it to guys like Bill to use the talent I had, do as well as I could, and give it all I had.

As for Bill, he'd have given anything to do what I was able to do. It wasn't always easy for me either but, it was possible. For Bill, it was impossible. And, that drove me for the next few decades. Today, I still swim, do a meet when I'm not coaching that much, and I feel as if I still owe it to those who'd give anything to do what I'm able to do. You may have your reasons but those are mine.

Coach Gary also wants to share new USMS guidance regarding meets at this [link](#).





President's Corner: Changes

By Phil Harasz

Google '*Songs about changes*,' and you find a great list of songs that capture various aspects of change. One link that came up, grouped songs about change into different categories: Changing your Life ("Changes", by David Bowie), Changing Society ("The Times They Are-a-Changin", by Bob Dylan), Changing the World ("Imagine", by John Lennon), and Moving On ("Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)", by Green Day). As we enter the Fall season, your St. Pete Masters Board is working to adjust to many changes happening across our club. These changes are coming from changes in our members' lives, from the USMS organization, and from the larger society in which our club operates. But the Board cannot deal with these changes without your help.

The first change we are dealing with is with Board membership. As a result of the resignation of one of our members, we asked Tabitha Brandt if she would step in, and she agreed. We welcome Tabitha, so please thank her the next time you see her. After all, this is a volunteer position!

My two-year term as President will end in February of 2022, when we typically hold our annual meeting and rotate out some of our Board's members. That is only four months away (but who's counting?). We've nominated one of our members to be my replacement and will make that announcement when the time comes.

Our intrepid reporter and newsletter publisher, Livia Zien, is retiring from her position as St. Pete Masters newsletter managing editor and publisher. If you are interested in taking on this job, please inquire! Livia leans on those of us willing to write articles for the newsletter, but she also contributes photos and articles herself. If you'd rather just edit and publish, that can work also – you just have to ~~pester~~ encourage people to write articles (She's been ~~pestering~~ encouraging me for two weeks to write this).

Then there are also changes thrust upon us from USMS. You may not have realized it, but each year when you renew your USMS membership, USMS collected an additional \$20 for annual our club dues and sent it to us. They will no longer provide this service, so we've been working on a way to collect it ourselves. Please don't be shocked if you're billed for an annual "club dues" payment – you've always paid it, it's just that it was bundled with your USMS renewal fee so you might not have noticed it. You will receive an email from us soon explaining this change.

USMS is working to improve their website and is asking for a lot of information about our club. This is great, as it provides another channel for folks to find us. But they are imposing rules about the circumstances under which clubs are covered by USMS insurance. For a scheduled workout, USMS insurance is only in effect when there is a USMS member coach standing on deck. Gary Bastie has us covered in the afternoon workouts, but not in the early morning workouts. We don't see this as an issue, as the facility itself is managed and insured by the City. This is the reason you cannot be in the pool without a lifeguard in the chair. But we think you should be aware if you choose to swim in the mornings, or on your own schedule.

Finally, the Board is navigating changes dictated by the macroeconomic environment. Our Long Course Meters (LCM) meet in August sold out. That's good, but it made us realize our entry fees were too low. Comparing our fees to others in the area validated that realization. Income from hosting two meets a year (Bob Beach Championship in the Spring, and the LCM meet in Summer) are our main sources of income. That, and the once-a-year club dues fee, which, at \$20, hasn't changed in *YEARS*. The Board will be raising the fee to \$25, to be billed in January of each year. But we also plan to use those dues to provide some club related "swag" or common use equipment for the team. We are still working out the details, so you can expect to receive an online survey asking for your preferences on how those fees are directed.

Whenever I'm feeling good and having a wonderful time, I remind myself to relish it, and fully enjoy it, because good times always come to an end. And whenever I'm having a difficult time, and feeling bad, I remind myself that "This too shall pass." The only thing constant in life is change. The best you can do is be open and ready for it, because surely, change will come.

Now, if I could just figure out how to change my kick...

Pool Competitions

USMS Short Course Nationals

by Sarah Swoch

2021 Short Course Nationals was long awaited after growing excitement in 2019 for the 2020 nationals that never happened. For some of us the extra time during quarantines gave us a chance to swim quite a bit more than usual. St. Pete sent 11 swimmers to this year's short course nationals, Tabitha Brandt, Jim Esposito, Alison Hayden, Anne Page, Greg Salomon, Ted Soltys, Chris Stickle, Carolina Ticeira, Susan Tokayer, Ken Wazyaniak, and myself.

Greensboro has two 50-meter pools, split into four 25-yard pools with an additional diving well. We had more than enough room for everyone to warm up with plenty of space. The meet was run exactly on time. We had great races and got to see friends from teams across the nation. We were split into a morning session and an afternoon session by age group. Those of us in the afternoon session watched the video feed of our teammates and cheered from our hotel rooms. The morning session swimmers gave us pep talks as we arrived for warm-ups in the afternoon.

Nationals is about the swimming, but it is also about having a great time with all the other swimmers. We didn't get to have a big social event, but we did get to go out with our team, plus a few friends we found along the way. Our nightly dinners were great for sharing our stories about what happened in the days' events, along with trying to decide which menu item was going to supply the most food. Greg even hosted an Olympic watch party at his Airbnb. Tabitha earned the title Team Mom, making sure we had matching attire and organizing us for events. She even made sure we had plenty of toilet paper at our hotel. Susan and Ken were our drivers for the meet, we would not have made it to the pool or dinner without you!

The results of the meet were pretty spectacular. St. Pete finished as the 6th place local club, not bad for only 11 swimmers.

For the women, Alison placed in the top three in all her events including 2nd place finishes in the 1650 Free, 400 IM, 200 Fly, 200 IM, and 200 Free, with 3rd in the 500 Free. Carolina secured 4th place finishes in both her 50 and 100 Breaststroke events. I scored 4th in the 1650 and 500 Free events, 3rd in the 1000 Free, 5th in the 400 IM and 200 Breast, and 2nd in the 200 Back with a time of 2:24.84. Anne scored 2nd in the 1000 Free, 5th in the 500 Free, 3rd in the 100 IM, and 6th in the 100 Free. Tabitha placed 4th in the 500 Free and 100 Fly, 5th in her 50 Free, and 2nd in the 200 Free. And Susan finished 3rd in the 400 IM, 200 and 100 Fly, 50 Free, 2nd in the 50 Fly and added a 5th place finish in the 100 Free to her collection.



Sarah, Alison, Carolina, Tabitha, Susan, Ted, Chris, and Ken (photo credit: S. Swoch)



Dinner Crew (photo credit: S. Swoch)



Sarah Swoch (photo credit: T. Brandt)



Hardware galore (photo credit: S. Swoch)

Chris won his 1650 Free and 200 Back with a 2:06.16, placed 2nd in the 500 and 1000 Free and 200 Fly with a time of 2:06.76, and topped off his races with 8th place hardware in the 100 Fly. Ted scored 9th in the 100 IM, 3rd in the 200 Fly, 7th in the 100 Fly, 8th in the 50 Free, and 5th in the 50 Fly. Ken scored 3rd in the 100 IM, 4th in the 100 Free, 4th in the 100 Fly, 4th in the 200 IM, and 6th in the 50 Free. Greg and Jim, both in the 55-59 age group, got to race each other in their heats of the 100 IM, 50 Back, 100 Free. They didn't get to duel it out in the same heat for the 50 Free, but managed to

finish next to each other with a 25.00 and a 26.98 respectively. They again raced side by side in the 100 Back going 1:13.41 and 1:11.87. Jim let Greg finish up his events, and the meet, with the 50 Fly all by himself.

It's starting to look like we have a team that is in great shape to be ready to swim in San Antonio, Texas for 2022 Short Course Nationals!

Full results can be found [here](#).



The warm-up look versus race-mode look (photo credit: S. Swoch)



Woohoo! (photo credit: S. Swoch)

SPM Women Dominate the Good Life Games in Clearwater

by Sharon Steinmann

A small but mighty group of St. Pete Masters "Senior" swimmers showed up big time at the Good Life Games at the Long Center in Clearwater on July 31st. This was a qualifier for the National Senior Game being held in Ft. Lauderdale- May 2022. The women's 50-54 age group represented by Paula Texel, Karen Westerman, Alison Hayden, and Tabitha Brandt was especially dominant winning every single event in the meet! And often taking 1-2-3.

Tabitha Brandt was first in the 100m free, 50m breast, 100m breast, 50m fly and 100m fly and she took 3rd in the 50m back behind her teammates. Paula Texel was first in the 50m free, 200m free, 50 back & 200 back. She also took second in the 400m free. Alison Hayden won all her events, and she swam a lot of hard events: 400m free, 200m fly, 200m IM, and 400m IM. Karen Westerman won the 100m back and was second in the 200m free, and 50m back.

In the women's 55-59 age group - Dawn Clark won the 200m free, 400m free, 100m back, and 200m back. While Sheri Bogue was 1st in the 50m fly, 2nd in the 200m and 400m free, and 3rd in the 100m free. The women's 60-64 was represented by Sharon Steinmann also won every event she swam: 200m free, 400m free, 50m back, 100m and 200m back.

It was a small group of 4 men but they made their mark! Eric Herman made his senior games debut swimming to 5 first place finishes in the men's 50-54 age group! Eric was first in the 50m free, 100m free, 50m fly, 100m fly & 100m breast. The two Mikes - Mike Smith and Mike Zabel were dominating in the men's 60-64 age group. Mike Smith was 1st in the 50m free, 50m breast & 50m fly. While Mike Zabel won the 200m back & 200m breast. Finally, last but not least Steve Freeman won all his events in the men's 65-69 age group winning the 400m free, 50m fly, 100m fly & the 200m IM.

This was one of several Florida Senior Games "qualifier" meets for the nationals being held at the International Hall of Fame Pool in Ft. Lauderdale - May 12-16th, 2022. There are several other Senior Games qualifier events on the USMS event calendar if you are interested in going. It would be fun to have a good group of SPM swimmers attend since it will be here in Florida.

Searchable results can be found [here](#).

St. Pete Masters LCM Meet 2021

St. Pete Masters still puts on a most popular meet, as evidenced by the two-day event in August. There were 177 registered swimmers, representing 46 clubs. We had 39 swimmers proudly representing SPM. That's pretty impressive, especially during a pandemic.

Several members returned to competition after being away for a few meets, most notably, Judge Bob Beach, who won all his events in the 90-04 age group! Also returning to competition were Michael Buchholtz, Paul Kurtz, Colleen O'Reilly, and Martha Gipson.

Newcomers Steven Bossert (50-53), Russell Hawkins (35-39), Megan Howson (25-29), Michael Whitehead (25-29), and Matthew Menendez (25-29) made strong showings at their first Masters meet. Welcome!



Heni Szeredi and Lisa Flanagan (photo: H. Szeredi)



Sheila Selfie and with Tricia Moses



Tabitha Brandt and Nancy Kiernan (photo: Sheila C.V.)

Congratulations to everyone who participated, and a special thanks to Tora Hill, the SPM Board, and all the volunteers and officials who made the meet possible.

Full results can be found [here](#).



Dana Greene and Sherri Bogue (photo: Sheila Carpenter-VanDijk)



Melissa Harasz, Davenia Navaroli, Henrietta Szeredi, Dawn Clark (photo: H. Szeredi)



Karen Westerman and Paula Texell (photo: S. Carpenter Van-Dijk)



Photos from Sheila - with a real camera! With John Nixon, Karen Westerman, Eric Herman, Paula Texel, Phyllis Scheidt, Sharon Steinmann

Dog Days of Summer LCM

By Tabitha Brandt

As we all transitioned back to Short Course season, quickly forgetting the feeling of that Long, Long, Long course pool we get comfortable going back and forth across the pool, the shortest way possible. Some of us just didn't get enough of LCM - I guess. 7 of us to be exact. We decided to give LCM another shot before saying hello to the SCM season opener next month and attended the Dog Days of Summer LCM meet at the Long Center on September 11.



Chris Stickle - superhero (photo credit: T. Brandt)



John and Sarah (photo credit: S. Swoch)



Tabitha Brandt (photo credit: S. Swoch)

This day was very special. We were able pay respect as a team on 9/11 and be there for each other as we endure the pain of trying to get across the long pool as fast as we can.

It was an honor to spend time with our teammates enjoying the sport we love. Cheering each other on and seeing the results of our training is always well worth it. The encouragement we not only received from one another but from the awesome timers and new friends we met was unforgettable. I not only had teammates but 2 timers and 3 swimmers I just met at the end of the pool cheering me on in my 200 Breaststroke (for the 1st time in my life). No words can explain the feeling I had while swimming and seeing and hearing them there routing me on. It still brings a smile to my face.



Mike, John, and Sarah (photo credit: S. Swoch)

This is how the 7 of us did:

- Peter Betzer won the 50 & 100 Back
- Tabitha Brandt won the 50 Free, 200 Free, 200 Breaststroke and 400 Free
- Susan Henry won the 50 Free, 200 IM and the 100 Back
- John Nixon won the 200 Back and the 200 IM.
- Mike Smith won the 50 Free, 50 Breaststroke and 50 Fly
- Chris Stickle won the 100 Breaststroke, 50 Breaststroke, 200 Breaststroke and the 400 IM
- Sarah Swoch won the 1500 Free, 200 Back, 100 Back, 400 Free and the 400 IM.

I'm not sure if this is the first SPM clean sweep, but every event that our 7 swimmers swam we won. Fun times!!

To add, on 9/18 Chris Stickle went up to Georgia Tech and swam in a Rainbow Trout Masters LCM meet. He brought back home a high point trophy with him of course! We are so proud!!

Now, we are looking forward to the Rowdy Gaines meet in October!



Chris Stickle high point (photo credit: C. Stickle)

Team 5k/10k ePostal Swim

Some people like the distance thing! This year, we had 6 swimmers partake in the 5k postal. Kudos to you! Preliminary results have Chris Stickle (30-34) 1st, Kern Davis (65-69) 1st, Pat Marzulli (70-74) 2nd, Sarah Swoch (35-39) 2nd, Alison Hayden (50-54) 1st, and Jo Ann Harrelson (65-69) 5th.

Apparently, Chris and Pat didn't get enough yards (or rather, meters) in and had to top it off with a 10k. Congratulations to Pat in his 1st place finish, and to Chris in his 2nd place finish!

Preliminary results can be found [here](#).



St. Pete Masters LCM Nationals Team

Four SPM swimmers are going to Geneva! Geneva, OH, that is. Robert Beach, John Nixon, Chris Stickle, and Alison Hayden will participate in the Long Course Nationals meet that was postponed from August due to the pandemic.

Judge Beach will be the wisest person, bringing his 91 years of wisdom to the pool. He will not be alone in this age group, however. There are 4 men in the 90-94 age group, but he is also the only one swimming the full complement of 6 events.

Chris and Alison just returned from Short Course Nationals back in July, and John has been actively

competing since meets started up again. There should be some great racing to watch!

Best of luck to Judge, John, Chris, and Alison!

You can watch the races which will be live streamed [here](#).



Open Water Swimming

The Swim for Alligator Lighthouse was the focus of open water swimmers in the area. While some of our members participated in the Clearwater Dog Days meet on September 11, some of our swimmers trekked down to the Keys to swim in the annual Swim for Alligator Lighthouse event. Dawn Clark, Alison Hayden, and Pat Marzulli opted for the open water, along with their trusted kayaking partners. At age Pat has been a long-time open water and distance swimmer, as well as a fierce competitor in the pool. With his wife, Martyne waiting to see him at the finish line, word has it, she jumped in the water to meet him!

It was also a special race for Dawn Clark who has been encouraging newbies as they race this distance for the first time.

She shares her swimming and camaraderie experiences with us.



Pat and Martyne at the finish (photo credit: M.Marzulli)

Swim for Alligator Lighthouse 2021

by Dawn Clark

Have you heard the saying “third time is a charm”? Well, that was what I was thinking as I was about to do my third Alligator Lighthouse 8-mile swim. You see, in 2018 I was in the middle of my swim, when I suddenly became so seasick (not to mention the overwhelmingly amount of Jelly Fish stings) that I wasn’t sure I would finish. However, I did finish 4h:40m. In 2019, eager to do this swim again, and with a goal of going under 4h 30m, the race was shortened to four miles the morning of the race because of impending weather. While I was disappointed, it was still a beautiful swim and I finished 2h 03m. Now we’re in 2020, and as we all know, this was the year of COVID-19 and the swim was canceled. Now here we are, Sept 2021, and my third times a charm year (so I thought). Heni Szeredi, my kayaker, Alison Hayden, and her kayaker, Laura Kaleel left for Islamorada on Thursday. We had the whole weekend planned out and looking forward to the girls’ road trip South. We arrived in Key Largo and got settled in to our Airbnb condo. We were pleasantly surprised with how beautiful our place was. The view of the Atlantic was amazing. We then headed out to Amara Cay so that Alison and I could do the early check-in and view the swim start. It was nothing short of beautiful. We then headed out to dinner on the Gulf side. Beautiful view, amazing friends and dinner were delicious. Now back at the Condo and doing some research on a snorkeling trip for Friday. Friday morning started off with an amazing breakfast from our own personal chef Heni Szeredi. We then proceeded to the Aquatic Center at Founders Park pool for a little pre-race swim and then to Amara Cay for a pre-race meeting. We then headed off to our snorkeling trip. This happened to be Heni’s first open water snorkeling experience and it was a great one and a beautiful day with friends! Back to the condo for another amazing dinner prepared by Heni.

Race Day is finally here. Woke up to a beautiful sunrise, and ready to get the day started. After a light breakfast, we headed out to Amara Cay. With the sun coming up, we could tell that the winds were being a little aggressive. Nothing we couldn’t handle, and the notion that the first four miles might be a little rough, but the back half would be better. Not



Alison, Dawn, Heni (photo credit: H. Szeredi)



Dawn & Heni (photo credit: H. Szeredi)



Alison, Dawn, Heni, and Laura (photo credit: H. Szeredi Szeredi)

the case. With the winds picking up out of the East, the waves picked up to about 4’. Not good for me, as I breath to the right. The waves would also make it very difficult for Heni. We weathered the conditions together, and I finished in 4hr 56m. While I was 26 minutes over my goal, I was just happy to finish. I was 1st in my age group, 14th female and 44th overall. What makes that

impressive to me, is that there were 197 solo swimmers at the starting line, with only 97 finishing. 100 of the solo swimmers did not finish due to the conditions. There were also 20 relay teams that did not finish. It was a rough day for sure!! I also must mention that Alison Hayden had an amazing swim. She finished in 3h 44m, 3rd female to finish and 6th overall!! Congratulations to all the finishers!! Now I look forward to my 4th time is a charm in 2023.

Gold Medalists Among Us

By Livia Zien

Need a little inspiration in your kick? Drill sets? In general? No need to look any further than to SPA alumni Bobby Finke and Brad Snyder.

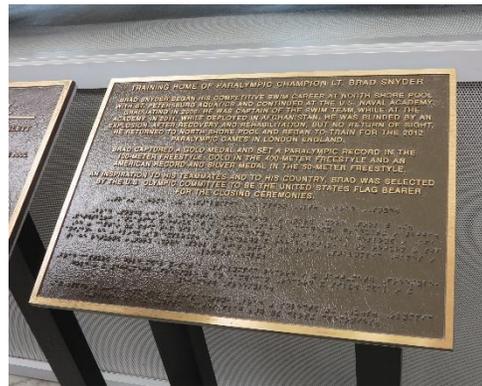
Bobby Finke wowed us, winning the men’s 800m freestyle at the Tokyo Olympics in July, the first American to do so in over 100 years. That was just a warm-up for him. On the final day of swimming, the first time Olympian found that extra gear, and won gold again, with a huge fan St. Pete fan club watching on the lawn of Northshore Pool. Charlotte shares the excitement from our local swim community below. Sara Wolski, writer for the Northeast Journal, also had the opportunity to interview

Bobby as he returned to his old stomping grounds, taking pictures and helping out at the ISCA meet at Northshore. She tells a moving story found at: <https://northeastjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/NEJ-SepOct2021.pdf>

Brad Snyder, now 37, inspired us once again at the Tokyo Paralympic Games, adding more Gold to his already large collection of 5 (from 100m and 400m Free in London and Tokyo, and in the 50m in Rio) plus 2 Silver medals in the 50m Free in London and 100m Back in Rio. This time, in Tokyo, racing in the men's triathlon for the first time, became the first United States athlete to win Gold in either the Olympic or Paralympic triathlon. Brad, served in Afghanistan as an EOD (explosive ordinance disposal) officer after graduating from the Naval Academy. In September 2011, lost his eyesight after an IED explosion. Since then, he has shared his struggles to adjust to his new life, and journey to being an Olympic champion. To add to his accomplishments, he is currently working on his PhD in Public Policy at Princeton University. Learn more about Brad at his website: <https://www.bradsnyder.us/> and in his book, *Fire in My Eyes: An American Warrior's Journey from being Blinded on the Battlefield to Gold Medal Victory.*



Brad Snyder in Tokyo, winning Gold (photo credit: NBCSports.org / Getty Images)



Plaque dedication ceremony at NSCA April 2014 (photo credit: L. Zien)

St. Pete Watch Party

... in honor of Bobby, Joe, Jeanne, Summer, and Autumn Finke

by Charlotte Petersen

I still cannot believe it is real. St. Pete Aquatics, coach Fred Lewis, and the entire Finke family has a double Olympic gold medal winner. I had heard rumors from coach Nesty via Joe Finke and Fred that Bobby was having a really good time at pre-Olympics camp in Hawaii, and he potentially had another 10 seconds drop in the mile from trials. In my "predict the medal winners", I moved Bobby up from a bronze in the 1500 m to a silver based on that information. I did not even have him medaling in the 800 m. Little did I know, despite admiring his work ethic in the gutter lane for all these years.

I am a swim nerd, a fair-weather sports fan, and just a fan of the Olympics. I took the week off during the swimming part of the Olympics and just enjoyed the experience. Watching Bobby swim the 800m prelims and seeing how smooth he looked, I thought that he would and should have a podium chance. I was nervous watching from my home and happy that my neighbors were away as I



Golden! (photo credit: C. Petersen)

screamed loud during the race. I was speechless when he finished with the infamous 26.3 final lap, surprised to see how he celebrated, and cried during the medal ceremony. One of the things his dad had told me prior to the trials was how proud he was when Bobby finished his races and did not draw attention to himself with the celebrations. Well-deserved celebration Bobby.



Bobby fan club – Paula, Tabitha, Sarah, Cheryl, and Karen
(photo credit: K. Westerman)

Watching NBC and all the watch parties for friends and families of the Olympians, I had hoped we could do something like that and very pleased to hear that Fred, Rebecca, and Doug (ISCA meet organizer) came up with the plans for a party outside NSAC. Bobby's sisters were sent to Orlando for the NBC party and I was told that Joe and Jeanne Finke opted to send the girls as they did not get to go to the trials. Jeanne Finke told me: "It takes a family to get him to this point".

Many St. Pete Masters, St. Pete Aquatics, swimmers from the ISCA meet, and many St.

Pete residents coming home from the drone show at the Pier gathered in front of the 2 large screens on the lawn of our hopefully new pool. Channel 8 was there and as it was a new crew from the previous days, so I had to point Bobby's parents out to them. The last session of the Olympics is always fun to watch due to both the 50m free and the 400 medley relays but this year only the 50m free for women (Danish bronze medal) and the men's mile counted (LOL). What a race, what a performance, what another epic finish (25.8 on lap 30...) and more tears of joy. I have watched the race several times



Crowds gathering (photo credit: K. Westerman)



Proud Mom and Dad Finke (photo credit: WFLA screenshot)



and the finish and our watch party numerous times, and it never gets old. Old or young, swim fan or not, this was fun. I asked Bobby at a later date if he had seen the clips of the watch party and he said yes. What he was not aware of was when 2 of the SPA swimmers gave his dad the celebratory Gatorade cooler bath.

Fred did not come but told me during Bobby's visit with SPM that he wanted to

watch it alone and had set his alarm clock in case he fell asleep. What Fred did with Bobby from the age of 5 to 18 is incredible and he did not get enough credit for this in my opinion. The gutter lane during LCM season has hosted some remarkable swimmers over the years including Robert Margalis, Brad Snyder, Melanie Margalis, and now Bobby Finke (Not sure what lane Nicole Haislett swan in but she was a sprinter).

Bobby came home via Jacksonville to Gainesville and unfortunately not to TPA so we could not greet him in the airport like we did with Melanie. The news channels did not like this either according to Joe. However, Bobby came to NSAC to greet the young swimmers



Bobby wins the 1500m free (photo credit: WFLA screenshot)

one day during the ISCA meet and came back to the pool Monday 8/9 AM after master's practice. He brought the 2 gold medals, and we were all allowed to touch, try, and admire the including how heavy they are. What a nice and humble young man. Lots of pictures and small talk and he was so patient with all of us. Bobby Finke, you are class act. I hope TYR and Toyota amongst others will appreciate what you did. Best of luck going forward to Paris2024 and who knows perhaps LA2028.

P.S. Brooke Bowman has challenged us to finish our workouts with a 50 all out and we should do so in Bobby's honor.



Inspiration for 2022

By Regina Novak

Here at Northshore, we can continue to ride the wave of glory and success after the summer Olympics. In general, it is absolutely wonderful to see the world care about our sport. Some of us got to see some of the Olympians swim at our pool during the ISCA meet this past spring. And most of all, one of our own St. Pete Aquatics swimmers earned two gold medals and an American Record. Every time Bobby's face pops up on our scoreboard, we are reminded that one of our own got to stand on the biggest swimming stage, receiving world recognition for his

talent, dedication, perseverance and grace. We all felt that victory! He is part of our swimming family, part of our community and that brings us joy.

It's good to be inspired. Perhaps for some of you, it has ignited a greater desire to set goals for upcoming racing. We have seen lots of young children inspired to start swimming as they join our age group team. The number one topic in my house is about swimming and what it takes to be an Olympic athlete, and instead of homework, I have definitely caught my son watching swimming footage. I admit I will take that over the fidget and pop it videos I catch my daughter on. If you don't know what a pop-it is, consider yourself lucky!

What inspires you? What are you **INSPIRED** to pursue right now? It could be swimming. Maybe it's something else. When I look at total wellness and talk to my clients about an overall approach to well-being, we look at more than just the physical health side:

- How can I grow in my emotional health? What is holding me back?
- How are my personal and professional relationships? How can I make them better?
- What is my environment like? What can I change to make me more productive? Happier? Healthier?
- What motivates me at work? If I'm not motivated or not enjoying my work, why is that? What would help me become energized about this job?
- How is my financial health? Do I have a plan and am I doing the things I need to do to get me there?

Don't wait for the New Year to make a game plan for life. Look at where you are currently and where you want to be this time next year. If you were to fast forward to December 31, 2022, what would you want to be different in your life?

Whatever the answer to that question, find ways to *inspire* action. If it energizes you, then you are likely on the right path.

More Tips from Coach Gary

Drill / Swim / Drill

It's been said that Drill/Swim/Drill is what happens when you fall off and get back on an oil rig. But, that's not what this is about. Rather, let's talk about drilling, not the dentist, hand tool, or oil rig variety, but the swimming variety. The reason is, it should be part of each workout and usually it is.

Take for instance, why we use swimming drills. It's not because the workout needs to be filled up with extra yardage but instead, we need it. Why? Because drills help you work on various aspects of your stroke(s) that are needy. And, the more you drill, the better you'll become at minimizing your weaknesses and enhancing and adding to your strengths.

Rather than list a bunch of drills however, I want to persuade you why you need to make them an important part of each workout. So, here goes...

First, don't be shy about drills and don't "shy" away from them. The reason is, they can help you. For instance, if you have low elbows on your freestyle recovery, you might try the "arm-pit" free, finger-drag, or similar drill. I like the arm pit version because it gets the elbows up but doesn't make the hands get lower.

Second, if you don't know what to work on, ask your coach, teammates, or a lane mate what they see as one of your weaknesses that requires some drilling. Since most of us have an opinion (about practically everything), gaining an answer should be pretty easy.

Third, Identify any problem areas. For example, the next time you swim for time (whether at a meet or in practice), what was your weakest part of that swim? Well, that's exactly what you need to work on for next time. Also, if you have a weak stroke, make it a priority to work on that stroke. If you shy away from it, nothing's going to change.

Fourth, drill realistically. Since we can't all be the next Caleb or Katie, we need to swim realistically. While that doesn't mean swimming slow, it does mean that our expectations should be achievable.

Let's say that you have a weak stroke. The best way to make it stronger is to swim it more often. But, to do that, you might need to take a day and drop down a group (good luck Fine Winer's), get more rest between swims, and have time enough to work on your weak stroke. Tim Kennedy and I did that several years ago with working on breaststroke. We dropped down to "the breaststroke group" and swam, you guessed it, breaststroke for the entire workout. We pushed each other, got in an exhausting workout, and both of us had success in our next breaststroke swims.

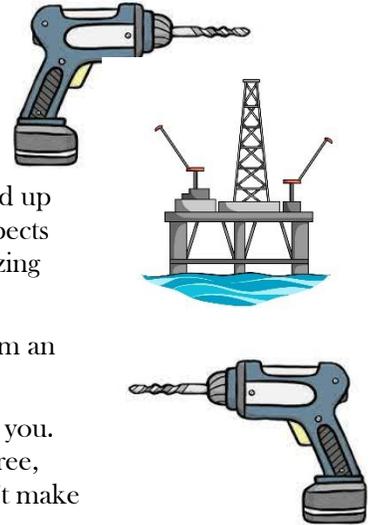
Fifth, learn to sub in a drill for part of all of a set. For instance, if the set is 50's, maybe do the first 25, the entire 50, or every other one, by drilling your weakness. Who cares who comes in "first" on a particular set. I remember doing 1-arm fly on 400's just for that purpose and it certainly helped my fly.

Swim, Don't Slosh

At times, practices can be quite challenging. That's what fins are for, eh? Well, I've got some good news for you. It's OK to skip a rep or two, get your swimming act together, and then get back into the flow of a workout. Here's why I say that.

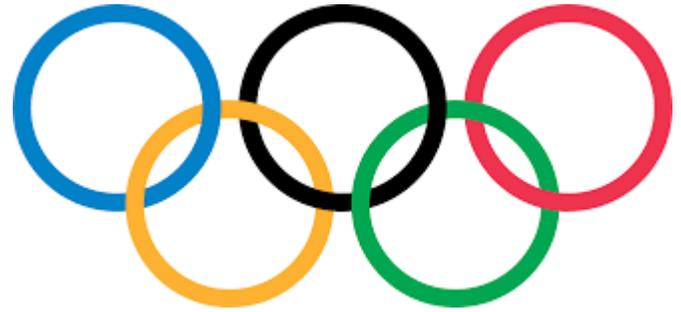
If you are tired, your stroke goes to pot (so to speak), and you start to slosh through the set. Problem is, now you're working bad form, sloppy stroke technique, and perhaps harming your shoulders, elbows, etc. It's better to rest for a few seconds than to be continuing. After all, we aren't kids any longer and it takes us longer to recover than it did say, 50 yr. ago (or more in my case).

So, what's the solution? First, recognize when you begin to slosh. With butterfly, it's obvious to everyone in St. Pete but not so with other strokes. So, if you you're your technique is faltering and the set isn't yet finished, take a quick breather and then get back in the hunt. You'll feel better, your stroke technique will improve, and you'll be able to blame me if anyone teases you.



Olympic Lessons

Like you, I watched the Olympics unfold and, as usual, I came up with some lessons that I think were noteworthy. It's interesting how if I write "not worthy" or "note-worthy", that one little letter makes all the difference and so it was with the Olympics.



As I watched, I saw how small things kept some out of medal contention. Oh, they were just as good as those who got the medals but, not quite as detailed. I'll bet they could write you a novel about what they could have//should have done but didn't. It's the small things that sometimes make all the difference in the end.

Some of the usual suspects qualified for and swam in Tokyo. Some didn't make it there out of the prelims. There are a number of reasons but, you know what? They're all great swimmers. Maybe they mis-tapered, didn't "extreme-line" enough, mentally prepare enough, or whatever. But to me, they were and are all great swimmers and none of them should think themselves losers. They did their best, sacrificed, but may have come up short. If that's all, they they're all winners in my book.

We got to see some surprises as well. Take Bobby Finke. He's had a history of bit swims when he needed them. He's also had to wait for success because of flu, dinged up wrist, and other stuff, just when he was supposed to have a big swim. Yet, he continued on the same path that his family, Fred, and others had helped him set. When his time came, Bobby was ready to do what he does best, and he did it in front of a world audience. The lesson? Don't stop if things don't work out just the way you've planned. Keep at it and your preparation will find the right opportunity. And, when it does, you'll be ready and deserve what you've worked so hard to achieve. And, so it was.

George Bole Scholarship Winners

Each year, the St. Pete Masters awards scholarships to SPA graduating seniors, named after our long-time coach, George Bole. The Board evaluates and discusses the submissions. This year, Mya Baker was awarded first place with \$2000 scholarship, and second place went to Ben Cote, with a \$1000 award. Treasurer Brooke Bowman presented the awards at the TYR Senior Championship Meet at NSAC in August. Mya is attending Loyola University New Orleans studying Biology and Pre-Health. Ben is at the University of Florida majoring in Health Science with Pre-Med intent. Congratulations to Mya and Ben! We wish you much success both in and out of the water.



Below is Mya's scholarship essay:

As I entered the pool deck in August 2010, I had no idea the impact that swimming would have on my life. I started swimming to become a surfer, like my father; however, once I began SPA's summer clinic, I was brought into a community of unfamiliar faces. As I continued swimming at SPA, these same unfamiliar faces became my coaches and life-long friends who shaped me into the person I am today. Through my successes and failures, swimming has taught me the importance of a strong work ethic, teamwork, and fortitude.

Swimming has taught me the significance of a strong work ethic. To most people, the early morning practices and long meets are a strange use of time, but they have taught me how to work hard for what I want. Sleeping in is nice; however, there is nothing more rewarding than seeing your hard work pay off in the pool. I have learned to effectively manage my time

which has shown me that if I can balance swimming, volunteering, and studying, I can do anything I put my mind to. As I go to college, my work ethic will help me achieve my goals both in school and any career.

Additionally, swimming has taught me the importance of teamwork and leadership. Although swimming is largely an individual sport, it takes a team to be successful. Without my teammates, I would not be where I am today. Working in a group has not only motivated me, but it has kept me grounded and enabled me to think in new ways. This past year I was captain of my high school team. As captain, I had many responsibilities such as encouraging teammates, planning events, and communicating with coaches. What I loved most about being captain was seeing others improve due to teamwork and commitment. In the future, I plan to take my "captain mentality" to college and motivate others, not only with my new team but in the classroom.

Finally, swimming has taught me the value of fortitude. Part of being an athlete is being mentally tough. In any sport, it takes discipline to train, compete, and improve. Because of swim, I learned to perform under pressure, work hard, and overcome setbacks and challenges. As a result, I have applied this same fortitude to my academics, such as attending tutoring sessions and studying long hours to improve my grades.

Growing up I thought swimming was simply a game. I believed that there would be no use knowing the intricate techniques and racing to be in first place. Now, I realize that I was wrong. Swimming has prepared me for the future. As I continue through college and pursue my career, the qualities swimming embedded in me will differentiate me from my peers academically, professionally, and in life. As I enter the pool deck for my final months at SPA, I realize the countless qualities that have shaped me into the person I am inside and outside of the pool.



Wedding Bells!

By Sharon Steinmann

Congratulations are in order for SPM swimmer, Tori Kirkman and Don Sigley who were married on September 18th in St. Petersburg. A beautiful ceremony was held at Our Savior Lutheran Church and Tori was radiant! A fun reception followed at the St. Petersburg Women's Club on Snell Island. Tori and Donnie spent a week in Ireland for their honeymoon which they said was magical and beautiful. We wish you both a lifetime of love and happiness!!!

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