



*See our newsletters, present and past and lots of other good information on our website:
<http://www.floridalmsc.org>*

**Jillian Wilkins
FL LMSC Chair**

Wilkins.Jilliananne@gmail.com



Many of you know that I teach children how to swim. Especially in the spring, I spend most of my days in the pool playing and having fun with children. As I am working with new teachers how to teach and new students how to swim I wanted to share with you a little something that I try and instill each day in my teachers. I want them to teach the kids every day something new. To try a new skill, to try a regular skill a new way. We do this to help the kids grow in many ways so we are not just making better swimmers, we are making smarter kids!

As April and Adult Learn to Swim month come to a close, I wanted to talk about ways we, as adults, can grow and learn in new ways. Let us try something new every time we show up at the pool, just like the kids! As adults that love this sport, we still tend to get stuck in our swimmingly ways. We stick to the same drills, workout, pool, coach, meet, open water event or triathlon! Let us all start to make an effort to search for a new thing to learn about! Let's look into some different events that we might want to visit together to learn something new about our sport.



Here is a great place to find new drills to try in the pool!

[https://www.usms.org/fitness-and-training/articles-and-videos?contentType\[0\]=Article&contentType\[1\]=Video&filter=&tags\[0\]=Stroke-Technique&tags\[1\]=Drills&categories\[0\]=Technique%20and%20Training&page=1&perPage=10&filterItem=20cf26a9-68b1-490f-8408-471cdd7513f8](https://www.usms.org/fitness-and-training/articles-and-videos?contentType[0]=Article&contentType[1]=Video&filter=&tags[0]=Stroke-Technique&tags[1]=Drills&categories[0]=Technique%20and%20Training&page=1&perPage=10&filterItem=20cf26a9-68b1-490f-8408-471cdd7513f8)

Here is a great place to find new workouts!

<https://www.usms.org/fitness-and-training/online-workouts>

Here is a local event that we can visit - free!

Lucky's Lake Swim, Orlando (Mon-Friday 6:30am, Sat 7:45am)

<https://luckylakeswim.com>

To look for a local club you can attend and workout with!

- a. <https://www.usms.org/clubs>

In Jacksonville on business? Meet with the local Open Water group to swim around the pier first thing in the morning! Contact me and I will give you one of the leads of this open water group!



Go to a local triathlon and watch a race!

Go and cheer on your friends at a local open water swim, swim meet or a practice!

Here are some local competitions that you can attend in 2019!

1. Coral Springs LCM Meet (June 29-30)
 - a. <https://www.usms.org/events/events/2019-coral-springs-lcm-meet?ID=8065>
2. St. Pete Masters LC Masters Meet (July 13-14)
 - a. <https://www.usms.org/events/events/2019-st-pete-masters-long-course-swimming-championships-1?ID=7807>
3. Marlin Masters Fall (Sept 14)
 - a. <https://www.usms.org/events/events/marlin-masters-fall-invitational?ID=7918>
4. Rowdy Gaines 11th Annual Masters Classic (Oct 11-13)
 - a. <https://www.usms.org/events/events/rowdy-gaines-masters-classic?ID=8069>

If you know of anyone wanting to learn to swim, now is the perfect time for them to start!
Share this link with them and they can find a place to learn near them!

<https://www.usms.org/-/media/usms/pdfs/alts/2019%20alts%20month%20programs%204919.pdf>

As we all continue to love and grow our sport I encourage you all to try something to and learn some more about your sport!



Congratulations 2018 Florida Award Recipients

Our 2019 Awards Social was held on February 9th in Clearwater, Florida where our 2018 Award winners were honored. The Florida LMSC currently recognizes five award categories. Congratulations to the following award recipients:

The **Florida LMSC Service Award** for past and present service to the LMSC was presented to **Joan Campbell**, FACT, for outstanding service.

The **Coach of the Year Award** honors coaches who have exhibited outstanding devotion to Masters coaching in the Florida LMSC. This year's award was presented to **Daphne Elliott**, coach of the Sarasota Sharks Masters (SHARK).

The **FL LMSC Club Service Award** honors members of individual clubs for outstanding past and present service to their club. Awards went to **Mark Usher**, Sarasota Tsunami Masters (SRQM) and three members of the SHARK team, **Mary Carbonaro**, **Jeff Elliott**, and **Mike Whaley**.

We have one fitness/competition award called the **Leather Lung Award**. To qualify for this award, swimmers must be currently registered with the Florida LMSC, must swim all events in USMS sanctioned or USMS recognized meets in a single season, and must complete ALL 18 events in SCY or SCM, or all 17 events in LCM; or all five USMS Postal Championships. The only splits permitted are leadoff swims on relays. A swimmer may receive more than one Leather Lung Award per year.

The following swimmers achieved the **Leather Lung Award** in 2018: **Tori Kirkman**, SPM – Postal; **Cheryl Kupan**, SPM – SCM; **Susan Meyers**, Sharks – SCY; and **Livia Zien**, SPM - Postal.

The **Overcoming Adversity Award** recognizes a FL LMSC Masters swimmer who has overcome adversity and provides inspiration to others while pursuing swimming. There were no nominations for this award this year. To nominate, please send a one page letter of recommendation by the nominator AND a one page description by the nominee on how Masters swimming has had a positive effect on his/her life, whether in training, competition and/or fitness activities.

To see past award recipients go to <http://www.floridalmsc.org/awards/>.

Swimmers, if you believe you qualify for the Leather Lung Award in 2019, please send your request to [Erin Condon](#).

To nominate a Coach for 2019 please see: <http://www.floridalmsc.org/awards/florida-lmsc-coaches-award-recipients/> .

Send all nominations for Club Service Awards to Erin as well.

Send nominations for Overcoming Adversity to [Sue Moucha](#) .

All nominations must be received by December 31, 2019 for 2020 awards.

Congratulations to our amazing Swimmers and Coaches!



FL LMSC Registrar Update

From your FL LMSC Registrar, Meredith Moore



As of April 29, 2019, we have 1932 members registered in the FL LMSC. This is 82% of the 2352 members we had registered at the same time last year 2018. Registrations are 46% Female and 54% Male. We are in line with USMS National Registrations which are also at 82% of 2018.

We have 65 Clubs registered in 2019; 67 in 2018.

UPCOMING EVENT: The 5/10K ePOSTAL CHAMPIONSHIPS will be held anytime from May 15-Sept 15th in any 50M pool. **Event Description:** You complete a timed swim of 5 kilometers and/or 10 kilometers in a 50-meter pool of your choice, then submit your times online. Some people swim for competition - to compare themselves to other swimmers doing the same event, some for the challenge, some for fitness, and others do it for fun — all who wish to participate are welcome. Your submitted time determines the final order of finish. Please go to the USMS website for more information: <https://www.usms.org/events/national-championships/epostal-national-championships/2019-epostal-national-championships> for further entry information and split sheets. Happy laps, Meredith Moore, FL LMSC Registrar



NEWS FROM FACT

Joannie Campbell



*I have received many questions, so, I hope the following will clear up some confusion.
- Joannie.*

Short Course Yards Season

The times and swims that you did at the State Games in December 2018 are part of the 2018-2019 Short Course Yards season. Any short course meet you did after May 31st is counted in that season until May 31st this year. That means that the National Senior Games in June of this year will be counted in the 2019-2020 SCY season.

Long Course Meters Season

Any Long Course Meet after September 30th 2018 and through September 30th 2019 will be posted in the 2019 Season – thus those that swam the Good Life Games March 9th are posting times for the Long Course 2019 Season.

Short Course Meters Season

The Short Course Meter season begins and ends with the calendar year, so times actually count for the calendar year in which they are competed.



Our Valentine's Meet this year was not well attended by FACT swimmers. I feel that many of them swam in the State Senior Games and with the cold weather just weren't in the mood. We did have good times though and ended up 4th place with a token number of participants. I'd like to emphasize the importance of local participation by swimmers in meets other than those at your doorstep. Swim meets are not cheap to run by the host and we appreciate that we have a number of them in our vicinity. I am not just talking to our team of FACT – I believe the Bob Beach Meet we had five women and ended up in second place in the combined scores to the host team!! PLEASE SUPPORT THEM. The USMS Spring (SCY) Nationals were held in Mesa, AZ and so far, I am not aware of anyone from our team who competed there.

In June we have a large contingent going out to the National Senior Games in Albuquerque. Personally, I am leaving on the 12th to acclimate to the altitude. Haven't been to the National Senior Games in a while and I'm looking forward to seeing many of my old friends. For years the age groups were separated by days and I'm happy to see we will all be there together. We have been pushing for that for several years.

Because it is a special honor of great magnitude to be listed among the World's Best Swimmers – on the FINA list – I have taken the trouble to go through the listing and indicate some of our FACT members. It's a rather tedious job. The list is available on the FINA link at www.dixiezone.org and I hope that those of you who swam on relays at the Pan American Games will see if you are among these elite swimmers.

Women

Individual: Betty Lorenzi. 91, All Time Backstroke Events, 2nd Place; Long Course and Short Course 2018 – 1st in all meter events.

Pat Tullman, 81, Long Course 9th 100 free and 50 fly, 8th in 1500. Short course – 8th 100 fly, 1st in 200 fly.

Martha Henderson, 82, Long Course 3rd in the 400 IM; Short Course 8th in the 1500.

Joan Campbell, 88, All Time 9th in the 1500; Long Course: 1st in 1500, 3rd in the 800; 4th in the 400; 8th in the 200; 2nd in the 200 IM; Short Course: 8th in the 200 free, 5th in the 400, 2nd in the 800 and 2nd in the 1500.

Men

William Zani, 80, Short Course Meters: 10th in both the 100 and 200 breaststroke

John Corse, 94, Short Course Meters: 7th in the 50 free and 6th in the 50 breaststroke

John Cornell, 90, Short Course Meters: 10th in the 50 free, 8th in the 100 free, 4th in the 50 back and 6th in the 100 back. Long Course meters: 7th in the 50 free, 6th in the 100 free, 6th in the 50 and 100 back, 8th in the 50 breaststroke and 4th in the 100 breaststroke.

Ed Graves, 95, Long Course Meters: 4th in the 50 free, 2nd in the 100 free and 3rd in the 50 back.

In the All Time Short Course Meters. listings our team remains 1st in the 360 age group in 400M and 800M free Relays with Tiger Holmes, John Corse, Ed Graves and William Adams. These records have held since 2014.

We also hold Long Course All Time 3rd Place with Ed Graves, John Cornell, John Corse and Robert Coulter.

The 2018 relays are many with American Records for Ed Graves, John Corse, John Cornell and William Zani. I will have to refer you to the website for most of the relays as they are many and more complicated than listing the individuals. I will give you a synopsis of those names you will see: Gail Grossman, Rae Suttie, Barbara McNulty, Martha Henderson, Karen Early, Betty Lorenzi, Jeannie Hackett, Luke Kung, John Corse, John Cornell, Joan Campbell, Karen Panker, Vicki Lacoppola, Pat Tullman, Robert Coulter, Ed Graves, William Zani.

Congratulations to all of you for your fantastic performances!! Hard work pays off. Please check the Long Course meets over the summer and hope to see you there. Bumpy Jones is going to be a bit tight for those of us going to Albuquerque but the St. Pete Meet and the Dog Days in Clearwater should fit in nicely.

I need to correct some information I had published in other newsletters. The Pan American Games in Medellin, Columbia, are scheduled for June NOT August of 2020. Mel Goldstein has assured me that all the information we need will be out in September and he will make sure we are informed, as we have a few of us planning on making the trip. The dates are June 17 – 27, 2020.

Have a successful Long Course season – meets are listed on the Dixie Zone Website at: www.dixiezone.org.

Keep up to date with all the news on our FACT website: www.factmasters.org





Shark Bites

By Jan Miller



<https://www.teamunify.com/TabGeneric.jsp?tabid=204931&team=flsysst>

The Sarasota Shark Masters have had a busy Spring. We welcomed back Rick Walker to the Head Coach position. Rick Walker and Daphne Elliott will share coaching duties for the team. Rick manning the morning workouts and Daphne the evenings. David Miner has relocated to North Carolina, and we wish him well there in his new adventures.

Shark Tank updates: Our Spring clean-up was a success and we are now sporting some new canopies which will be great for our next meet in June. We will be installing a new pool liner at some point this summer, so stay tuned for details.

February 2nd the Sharks hosted the Gulf Coast Games for Life at the Shark Tank. This is one of the Florida State Games Series Qualifiers.

February 9 – 10, 2019 a contingent of Sharks participated in the 27th Annual Masters SCY Valentine's Meet at the Long Center in Clearwater where many of us scored high point awards. This meet was followed by the Florida LMSC Awards presentation and luncheon. We are proud to announce that Daphne Elliott was awarded Florida LMSC 2018 Coach of the Year. Sharks receiving the LMSC Club Service Award were, Mary Carbonaro, Jeff Elliott, Mike Whaley, and Susan Meyers the Leather Lung.

Susan Meyers earned Long Distance All Star for 2018 for 75-79 age group. Her events were: One Mile Open Water at Little Grassy Lake in Carbondale, IL, 2 mile at Lake Audubon, in Reston, VA and the One Hour and 3000 yard postal events. Congratulations. Susan!

February 15-16, 2019, a very small contingent, (Carol Mitchell and Jan Miller) traveled to Fort Lauderdale to participate in the 26th Annual Ft Lauderdale Masters Challenge. This was the last Masters meet held in the ISHOF pool before their renovation project began. We were warmly greeted by Marty Hendricks and our SFTL friends. We wish them well during the renovation process.

March 23 – 24, 2019. Bob Beach Championships. Congratulations to High Point winners June Carson and Dean Mitchinson.

March 31, 2019, Nevis to St. Kitts Cross Channel Swim. Nancy Kryka, Mark Whaley, Mark Krakower and Nate Nevid swam the Nevis to St. Kitts Channel Swim. Nancy reports that the weather conditions were excellent with water and air temps around 81 degrees and the water was calm. There were about 250 swimmers from many different countries. They swam with the Atlantic on their right and the Caribbean on the left! This was Mark's 2nd swim so the group benefited from his experience. They could see the bottom the whole swim, reporting

that the water was beautiful in colors with many sea turtles, large starfish, corals and sea anemones. They celebrated afterward with the traditional Sunshine's Killer Bees on Pinney's Beach.

April 11 – 14, 2019. YMCA Masters 2019 National Championships: After four days of swimming the Sarasota Shark Masters are the YMCA Masters 2019 National Champions. While we were outnumbered, 43 Sharks pulled together and fought tooth and fin for every single point! We swam events we would rather scratch and cheered and toughed it out TOGETHER. Many athletes maxed out their events for points. The relays brought out the best in our "FTT" (FOR THE TEAM) attitude. Several Sharks earned YMCA National titles. The Shark Men placed first in points and the Women second. It was a four-day roller coaster ride of points. While we ended up tired we are so happy and wish to thank Rick Walker and Daphne Elliott for their coaching and support.

Looking forward: Several Sharks are headed to the Canadian Nationals in Montreal on May 24th and 25th. Others are headed to the National Senior Games in Albuquerque, NM on June 16th to 19th.

Please join us at our next annual event: Bumpy Jones LCM Classic, June 8th and 9th. It's always Shark week in Sarasota. See you at the Shark Tank.



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St. Pete Masters
<http://stpetemasters.org/>



News from the Outside Lanes...
by Regina Novak

The St. Pete Masters team is constantly finding new ways to challenge themselves in and out of the pool. 2019 started with the annual Frogman swim and Hour swim. 11 swimmers braved the cold waters to earn some impressive finishes in the Frogman, including father and son swimmers John and Sean Doolittle.

Bragging rights were earned in the hour swim by Judge Beach (2nd nationwide in his age group), the All American Relay team of Sarah Swoch, Sarah Kwon and Kristen Rambicure (women's 25+) and the All American Relay team of Charlotte Petersen,

Dawn Clark and Cheryl Kupan (Women's 55+). All the other SPM relays were also in the Top 10.

In February, SPM represented at the Annual Valentine's Meet in Clearwater with an overall 2nd place finish.

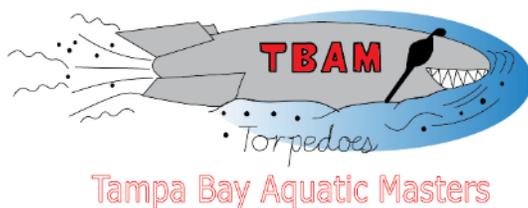
SPM held their 49th Annual Bob Beach SCY Championship meet in March. Some highlights included the return of open water extraordinaire Ron Collins to the meet (with an age group win), Celeste Brandon returning to competition after the birth of her daughter in November, and a super-fast 200 free relay 1st place finish in the men's 35+ group by Sean, Sean, Shawn and John.

Out of the water, our team members shine in active and creative pursuits. Several swimmers put on their running shoes for the Skyway Bridge 10K, the Gasparilla Distance Classic, the Baycare 5K and Iron Girl. Ron Collins continues to hold concerts, classes and workshops locally with Tampa Taiko. Jeff Johnson and his wife April and daughter Betsy, performed in



Pirates of Penzance at the St. Petersburg City Theater. Colleen O'Reilly, Barbara Prescott and Kathy Selles have combined their musical talent and passion to make music together.

The next few months bring the St. Anthony's Triathlon, Spring Nationals, Hurricane Man, Swim Across America, our SPM long course championship meet and numerous open water events. There is no doubt SPM will represent around the state with impressive swims and great camaraderie, building friendships and making memories along the way.



By Shelley Stewart

Several TBAM members participated in the Bob Beach SCY Meet: In the following pictures: Stephen Knauss (butterfly). Following: Becky Nelson, Christian Colmaneras, Kathleen Quisenberry, Kelly Ezagury, Karen Ness, and our Capitan – Juan Cue



Brenda Loggins, David Hunter & Juan Cue will be participating in the Aquabike division of the [2019 Pontevedra Tri ITU Multisport](#) in Spain from April 27 through May 5. Our best wishes to their success!

Most of the team is looking forward to and participating in the Hurricane Man swims May 4.

Our Coach, Francisco "Sonny" Gonzalez-Silva, teammate Kelly Ezagury and Shelley Stewart participated in St. Anthony's Triathlon.

Our beloved Coach "Sonny" is ALTS (Adult Learn to Swim) certified. We welcome ANYONE that wants to get wet, from novice to expert, Coach Sonny has you covered.

We can be found at:

Physical Practice Location: Cyrus Green Recreation Center
2101 E. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd, Tampa FL 33607

<http://www.tampaswim.com/> OR <https://www.facebook.com/Tampa-Bay-Aquatic-Masters>





by Holly Neumann

Sarasota Tsunami Masters posts busy spring

April is Adult Learn-to-Swim Month, and the Tsunami Masters crew is out in force, teaching its community to swim. The Swimming Saves Lives Foundation-sponsored class has 19 students, and nearly as many volunteer instructors. The lessons session runs on Saturdays at noon through May 18.



April got off to an exciting start for Tsunami members Martin Moore and Andrea Silvergleit, who eloped, marrying in Virginia on April 4. The news was met with surprise and delight from their Masters teammates.



Tsunami swimmers are making their mark in area meets, including Terrie Hoops, who cleaned up at the Charlotte County Senior Games, collecting gold in breaststroke and freestyle events in her first swim meet.

Looking ahead ... Tsunami member Mark Usher takes his super-star officiating act on the road in May to the TYR Pro Series meet in Bloomington, Indiana. Way to go, Mark!

Triathlon season is upon us, and several Tsunami members have big plans. Best of luck to our swimmers this race season!



VILLAGES AQUATIC SWIM TEAM

VAST News

Mary Rose Rowan



The athletes who swim with the VAST workout group are all in the “senior” age bracket. We have the opportunity to swim in the local senior games sponsored by the Florida Sports Foundation which are held periodically, and throughout the state. Then in the following December, anyone who has placed in one local event is eligible to compete in the Florida State Senior Games. If a participant earns 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th place at the State Games, they are then eligible to enter the Senior Nationals. This year Senior National games are held mid-June in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Many VAST swimmers have earned the honor of participating and will soon be on their way. We wish them safe travels, good swims and lots of fun.

Our coaches are very mindful of those participating at Senior Nationals and the events that they will be swimming. They have integrated special focus on those who are Albuquerque-bound into our regular practices, while welcoming and giving personal assistance to our new, inexperienced swimmers. Whether going to Nationals, or trying for 200 yards all at once, we are all enjoying the experience of swimming with VAST.

Our Board, and some very capable volunteers, have recently added some programs to our monthly meetings. During one meeting, Coach Bob Jennings explained the differences in competing in Florida and competing in Albuquerque where the altitude is over 5,000 feet. Suggestions were given for training for this competition and also for preparation upon arrival in New Mexico. We have benefited from fitness trainers and nutritionists. Team members have also shared their expertise and experiences providing additional ideas for the team members to improve their swimming, their health and their lives.

Meanwhile, back in the pool, Connie Greb who started an Adult Learn to Swim program (ALTS) in the Villages, continues to expand this wonderful and very popular program. There are currently 11 trainers who assist with the classes.

Fifteen students are enrolled for one week each month, April through October. In addition to the classes, there is now time set aside at a pool for those who participated in the class to continue to work on their skills in an encouraging group environment, with at least one trainer present. Over two hundred adults have overcome their fear of the water and now happily participate in many water activities.

Our Fabulous Fridays continue with our amazing stroke and turn clinics. Trice Hurr and her team of volunteers continue to tweak their methods of teaching and we continue to tweak our strokes, starts and turns. A team relay meet was held on the fourth Friday. It was very well organized by Bill Russ and Dave Jarvis. It was lots of fun and very helpful in improving starts and finishes.

When you are old enough, come join us. VAST life is good.



MY FRIEND, DR. MILAN K – SWIMMER AND THEN SOME

By: Anne Simonsen, Ph.D

My friend, Milan Kutanovski., MD, celebrated his 90th birthday on March 6, 2019. I have been so fortunate to know him. He has been a long-time member of The Villages Aquatic Swim Team (VAST), The Villages International Folk Dance Group, and an avid and very good golfer.

His prowess as a member of VAST is legendary. He has been in the TOP TEN SWIMMERS in his age group for many years. Of his 53 Top Ten rankings, there are 31 Individual rankings and 22 Relay rankings. Very Impressive -- to say the least. Milan received the “Made a Difference Award” from VAST in 2018.

In addition, Milan is an integral part of the International Dance Group. This group practices dances from Macedonia (Milan’s home country), Armenia, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Israel, Greece, and other Eastern European countries. Milan can be found at the front of the dance line and when he gives the word “**ОПАХ!**” and waves his red handkerchief, everyone turns in time to the music.

His birthday party on March 6 was a real celebration of his life. He shared with all of us who were there. (Friends, VAST members and Dance Group members) the history of his coming to America and then to The Villages. It is quite a story, and one that I will remember for a long time. Milan came to America from Europe as an Orthopedic

Surgeon. When he arrived in New York he was required to complete a second residency in orthopedic surgery with a specialty in traumatic injuries. In order to practice medicine in the US, he had to take and pass the Certification Exam and an English Language Exam – which he did easily.

Milan is a true Renaissance Man and gentleman. It is always a pleasure to be around him – he knows how to make others feel good.

Thank you for being in my life, Milan.



Portrait of Milan
Milan receiving the VAST Made a Difference Award

Dr. Simonsen was the President of VAST from June 2016 through May 2018. She has a Ph.D. from the University of Maryland in Recreation Therapy/Administration and Masters' degrees in Counseling, Legal and Ethical Studies, and Education/Recreation. She has been the President of and served on the Boards of state, national, and charitable organizations.

She was the Director of the Recreation and Leisure Studies Programs at Gallaudet University and Hood College, as well as an Adjunct Professor in the School of Management and Technology at the University of Maryland University College. Prior to working in academe, Dr. Simonsen directed Therapeutic Recreation in hospitals and public agencies.

She likes to swim, run/walk, golf and dragon boat.



Upcoming Events

❖ Hurricane Man

Sunday, May 4, 2019

1000m and 2.4 mi

St. Pete Beach

http://stpetemasters.org/?page_id=148

❖ Fontana Lake - Best Dammed Lake - 5K, 10K, 15K

Saturday, July 20, 2019

Almond, North Carolina (new Bryson City)

Dave Miner, Race Director

Event information and registration:

<https://www.swimwithoutlimits.com/event-information-fontana-lake/>

❖ For more swims- pool events as well as open water, go to

www.dixiezone.org



CREATE MORE DRAG – SWIM FASTER – REALLY???

Karen Klisch, PhD¹

3/4/19



Every swimmer knows drag is a bad thing. But consider this – maybe not completely. Is it possible that being able to create more drag could actually be beneficial to a swimmer, help a swimmer swim faster? It seems counter-intuitive, but there is one part of a swimmer's stroke where **more drag is a good thing**. When swimmers are being helped with the technique and mechanics of a stroke the focus is primarily on the major movements of the body, head, arm and legs.

The front crawl arm pull is, the part of the overall stroke that contributes the most power to the stroke. Swim teachers and swim coaches work with swimmers, and even other swimmers work with their colleagues to get the high elbow position, a smooth streamlined entry position with hand and forearm, the proper path of pull so that most of the major parts of the stroke are just right. But how often does the stroke instruction get right down to the nitty gritty of what the fingers and thumbs should be doing **during** the pull?

As a lifelong competitive swimmer, (I started competing in junior high school) I cannot remember a time when there was any specific mention of what to do with

the fingers and thumbs. It is assumed that the fingers and thumbs will do the right thing as long as the hand is in the right place.

In 1968, the publication of Doc Councilman's "*Science of Swimming*" revolutionized the sport of swimming. Although it took years for the scientifically researched stroke techniques to reach the typical swimming class, the competitive world was incorporating the new stroke techniques. For the current, newly minted competitive swimmer who learned to swim in the 50s-60s, it was simply understood that to hold water in the hand one had to squeeze the fingers and thumb together and cup the hand slightly. That way the water would stay in the palm. Back then this was the proper way to grab the water when swimming the front crawl.

If today's Master's swimmers over 50 years of age are just starting to learn the competitive strokes they may have taken swimming lessons before the Doc Councilman era and will most likely have been taught the closed, cupped hand position for the front crawl. The exception to this is the swimmer who **did compete** in the 1950s through the 1970s. **Unfortunately very few women during those years had the opportunity to swim competitively.** Most likely, if a female did learn to swim at all, she was taught the closed cupped hand position.

Case in point – a few years ago while working with a new Master's swimmer in the mid 60 year old age group, she consistently used the tightly closed finger and thumb position throughout the entire front crawl arm stroke. She was convinced that it was the only way to get a hold of the water and generate power in the stroke. Guess what? – WRONG!

In order to generate the most efficient and powerful pull, the hand and arm need to be able to hold the water so that the spot where the hand starts the pull is as close to stationary as it would be if the swimmer could grab a bar out in front and simply pull her/his body over the bar. Once the hand is ready to pull, it is desirable to have as much resistance as possible against the palm of the hand so that there is something to pull/push against. There are several forms of drag that affect the ability of the swimmer to move forward. All of these are the ones a swimmer wants to reduce or eliminate. In swimming, the resistance desired against the palm of the hand during the pull is referred to as "drag". For maximum pull efficiency and power, one wants the **greatest amount of "drag"** possible against the palm during the pull.

How to enhance drag in the pull?

In a clamshell – (well, nutshell) the fingers should be slightly spread and the thumb slightly away from the side of the palm. (Emphasis on **slight**) Fingers

should be firm but not stiff. Finding the right position to produce the greatest thrust is the challenge for each swimmer.

How does this work?

There is a layer of sheathing around objects that move through water. One of the best examples of this is the smooth sheath of water that appears around dolphins as they swim. This is called a "boundary layer". If your fingers are spread, there is a boundary layer around each finger as you pull. One theory suggests that the fingers should be spread just enough so that the boundary layer around one finger meets/touches the boundary layer around the next finger creating a block so that water does not flow through. This results in a slightly wider hand.

An illustration of this can be found at

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IRLHbsARFD4&vl=en>

The research

There have been a significant number of research studies on the possible impact the position of the fingers and thumbs have on the ability of a swimmer to generate power. Studies have experimented with a variety of finger and thumb positions including:

- fingers closed, thumbs at the side of the palm, palm flat
- fingers slightly spread, thumb slightly away from the side of the palm, palm flat
- fingers spread (fairly open), thumb well away from the palm and palm flat.

In a February 2017 study published in the ***Journal of Applied Biomechanics*** the beneficial effect of a slight finger spread during the front crawl pull was supported. In each of the studies reviewed for this article there was agreement that some small degree of finger spread and slight thumb spread do create more drag making the pull more powerful and efficient. The resulting wider surface area of the hand translates into greater propulsive force. This greater hand/palm area makes it possible for a lower stroke rate to produce the same thrust. Simply put, spread fingers and thumb achieve greater propulsive efficiency. For the swimmer who is applying the same effort as usual, the swimming speed may be slightly increased --- which could possibly provide a reduction in the few tenths of a second needed to win the race.

If you have good kinesthetic feel for the water, you should experiment with several different finger/thumb spread positions. Of course, ultimately use the position that produces the greatest drag i.e. propulsion. Another way to find the best spread would be to try several spread positions and time yourself for a

specific distance. Many trials should be used to determine this. Once that is accomplished it will take practice to hone the right position for you.

Empirical observation

Phelps and Ledecky use a slight spread, but it is practically impossible to see it in the few underwater shots of them during a race. Elite swimmers and swimmers with very efficient strokes utilize the very slight finger spread during the pull. **If** the fingers and thumbs can be seen during the pull of the “good” swimmers, empirical observation does confirm that a slightly spread finger and thumb position is being used which reflects what the research has found.

In case you have not given your fingers and thumb position much attention as you swim (applicable to all of the four strokes) perhaps you should start to do that. You may find that you are already using the “right” position as you pull. Many swimmers do naturally find it because they have a good feel for the water and are able to generate good purchase. But if you do not – you just might gain some speed by focusing on your fingers/thumbs.



¹ Karen Klisch has a PhD from the University of Maryland in Physiology of Exercise. She grew up in Florida and has been a competitive swimmer off and on since junior high school.

Karen was Chair of a college department of physical education, recreation and athletics and Director of Aquatics for years. She coached intercollegiate swimming. She has also coached Masters swimming, and is currently a Professor for the University of Maryland University College – She teaches online, that is how she can live in Florida.

She continued to swim for years until five years ago when a careless driver caused a devastating car crash which broke her back.

Karen was a member of VAST for the last eight years during which time she worked with the swimmers on stroke correction. Most recently she decided to do what she could to swim so she got back into swimming. She is not able to swim in a lane with others – too risky because of her injury so she is no longer a member of VAST. She swims on her own and is still a member of FACT. -ed



Swimmer Magazine

The USMS History & Archives committee is looking for a few issues of the old SWIM magazine. If you have one or more of the magazines listed below and are willing to part with them, please contact Meegan Wilson at meegan@kodhaus.com. The committee can reimburse your costs for mailing the magazines.

Year	Issue
1984	OCT/NOV
1984	DEC/JAN
1985	FEB/MAR
1985	APR/MAY
1985	JUNE/JULY
1985	AUG/SEPT
1985	OCT/NOV
1985	DEC/JAN
1986	FEB/MAR
1986	APR/MAY
1986	JUN/JULY
1986	AUG/SEPT
1986	OCT/NOV/DEC
1988	MAR/APR
1991	SEPT/OCT



THE NEXT NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Sheila Carpenter-van Dijk

Please send newsletter articles to Me

IN WORD FORMAT PLEASE!

(sheilacv@verizon.net or fishtail@usms.org)

**PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR TEAM NAME
IN THE SUBJECT OF THE EMAIL**

If you have questions about format, or content, be sure to ask me!

The next newsletter is scheduled to be on the web (<http://floridalmc.org>) and in your inbox in August, 2019, so I'll need your articles by **July 15, 2019!**





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(* Elected positions)

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