

2015 MASTERS SWIMMERS OF THE YEAR

# SW

## SWIMMING WORLD

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*Dana  
Vollmer*

*"Momma on a Mission"*

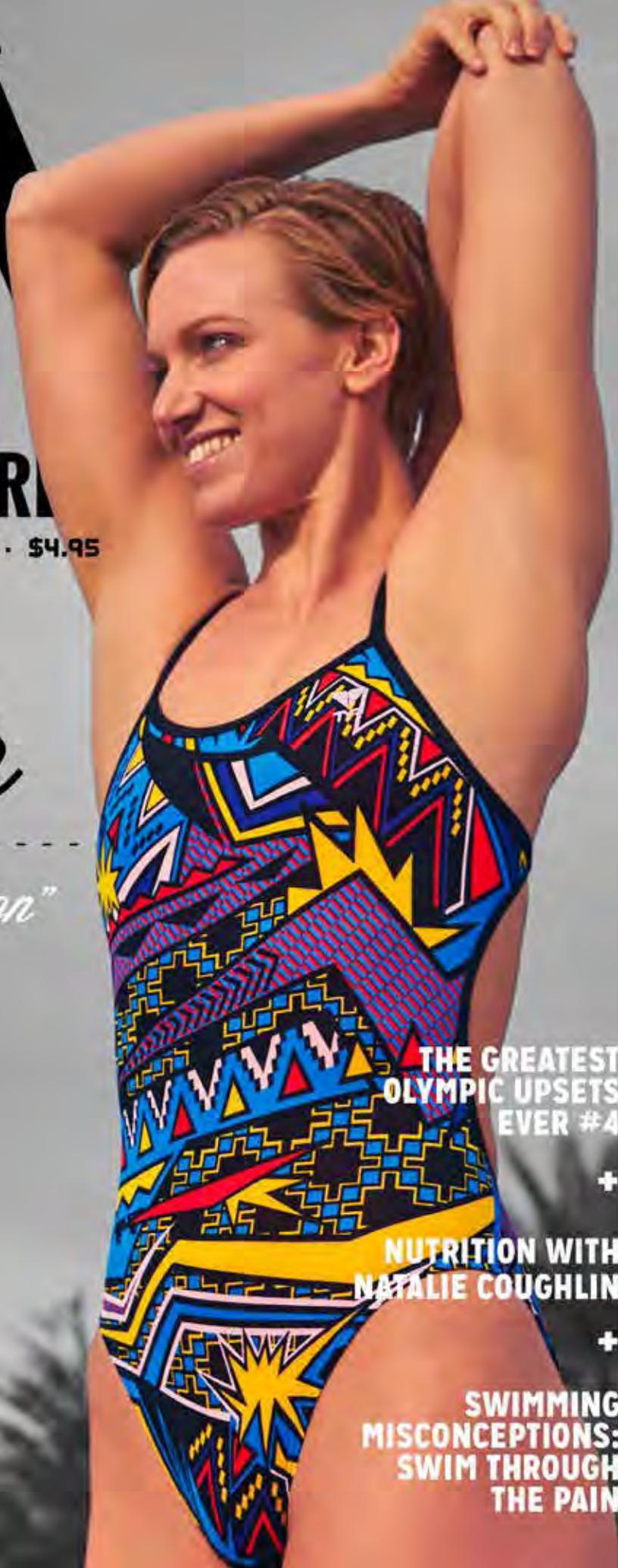
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## FEATURES

### 016 TOP 9 OLYMPIC UPSETS: #4 SANDY NEILSON— THE LAST AMERICAN

by Chuck Warner

Sixteen-year-old Sandy Neilson was the third fastest American in the women's 100 free to qualify for the U.S. Olympic team in 1972. When she got to Munich, she also had to race world record holder Shane Gould. No matter: Neilson won the event... and with that upset victory nearly 44 years ago, she is now "The Last American" woman to be crowned the outright Olympic champion in the 100 freestyle.

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by Jason Marsteller, Annie Grevers, Seren Jones, Sophia Chang and Hideki Mochizuki

### 026 MOMMA ON A MISSION

by Annie Grevers

Dana Vollmer is many things: Olympic gold medalist, former world record holder in the women's 100 fly, wife, mom, daughter, swimming enthusiast—and after retiring from the sport after the London Olympics and giving birth to a son, Arlen, in March 2015, the 28-year-old is back in the pool and has her eyes set on Rio.

### 030 HISTORIC SURPRISES AT U.S. OLYMPIC TRIALS: GABE WOOD- WARD'S OLYMPIC PRAYER

by Chuck Warner

After Gabe Woodward graduated from USC in 2001, it seemed that his swimming career was over. For nearly two years, he didn't race or train. But his strong faith brought him back to the sport in 2003. He prayed that he would be able to honor the Lord by humbly fulfilling the potential he had been given as an athlete. With that prayer, his dream of making the 2004 U.S. Olympic team began to unfold.

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by Annie Grevers

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A common misconception is that it is necessary to "swim through the pain" to optimize performance. Whether a swimmer suffers



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shoulder pain from conditioning or injury, continuing normal training can negatively impact technique (and performance). This article presents the characteristic technique elements that stress the shoulder on butterfly and freestyle to help swimmers and coaches identify problems before they become injuries.

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## ON THE COVER

At 12, Dana Vollmer was the youngest participant at the 2000 Olympic Trials. At 16, Vollmer qualified for the Olympic team and won gold in Athens as part of the 4 x 200 free relay. At 20, she failed to qualify for the 2008 Olympic team. At 24, she won three gold medals in London and became the first woman to break the 56-second barrier in the 100 fly with her winning WR time of 55.98. Now 28—as a wife and mom of a one-year-old boy, Arlen—Dana will be looking to make her third U.S. Olympic team. (See feature, page 26.)

[PHOTO PROVIDED BY TYR SPORT]



# 026



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# GET RIPPED

BY CASEY BARRETT

Let's pretend for a moment that this applies only to those swimmers over the age of 21. And not those athletes not yet of legal drinking age, who just might also be known to indulge on college campuses everywhere. It goes without saying that alcohol does not do a body good...though it's been known to relax a mind, induce laughter and has played a timeless lead role at countless parties. This isn't a judgment on those who choose to imbibe. Lord knows I've been known to bend an elbow in the past....

But it seems to have taken the new, ridiculously ripped physique of Michael Phelps, circa 2016, for swimming folks to really sit up and start connecting the dots between drinking a six-pack—and having one...because both Phelps and Coach Bob Bowman have been pretty clear about why he's in the best shape of his life. It's simple, said Phelps, at a recent Grand Prix meet in Orlando: "Not having a drink for over a year-and-a-half—it's incredible."

When asked last summer at nationals why his swimmer was looking so good, I'm told his coach put it a bit more bluntly: "Well, he cut out the booze," said Bowman. "And all the crap that came with it."

All the *crap*, indeed. For Phelps, that included a pair of DUIs over the years, along with assorted behavior that didn't exactly enhance his performance in the pool. Yet it's a tribute to his otherworldly talents and mental strength that he didn't let his unhealthy extracurriculars hold him back from becoming the greatest Olympian in history. Just think, you might be saying, what he could have been without all that.

Well, maybe. But that's so much water—or beer—under the bridge at this point. The point now is to observe the difference. The physical evidence can't be denied.

This isn't a beauty pageant or a bodybuilding contest, and ripped looks don't always translate into fast times. (I can remember a few weight room-obsessed jokers on my teams who always seemed more interested in the mirror than the clock....) Still, it's usually a pretty good indicator of performance, and it's a truism that when you look good, you feel good. And when you feel good, you generally swim fast.

It seems a given that Phelps will. How fast is anyone's guess, but my bet is that two or three world records are on call. 49-mid in the 100 fly? 1:53 in the 200 IM? Yeah, sounds about right.

So, you have to wonder if his embrace of abstinence has had any trickle-down effect among his peers and competitors? We know Ryan Lochte has always liked to have a good time, and it's never seemed to hamper his physique or his times. Is he taking a page from MP and climbing on the wagon for what's likely to be his last Olympic ride? What about Chad LeClos or Laszlo Cseh? They've surely noticed.

What about all those very fast men and women who are now enjoying a last gasp of rest before gearing up for the Trials push? NCAAs are over, and on plenty of college campuses, that often means the swimmers have been unleashed upon many a party. April is the time when swimmers are known to let their chlorinated hair down and raise a glass or two—which is fair enough after a long season, but don't pretend it won't cost you something.

Because the greatest of all time is already way ahead of you. ❖

**Casey Barrett**  
Senior Commentator



**PUBLISHING, CIRCULATION AND ACCOUNTING**

www.SwimmingWorldMagazine.com

**Chairman of the Board, President - Richard Deal**  
DickD@SwimmingWorld.com

**Publisher, CEO - Brent T. Rutemiller**  
BrentR@SwimmingWorld.com

**Circulation/Art Director - Karen Deal**  
KarenD@SwimmingWorld.com

**Circulation Manager - Taylor Brien**  
TaylorB@SwimmingWorld.com

**Advertising Production Coordinator - Betsy Houlihan**  
BetsyH@SwimmingWorld.com

**EDITORIAL, PRODUCTION, MERCHANDISING, MARKETING AND ADVERTISING OFFICE**

2744 East Glenrosa Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85016  
Toll Free: 800-352-7946

Phone: 602-522-0778 • Fax: 602-522-0744  
www.SwimmingWorldMagazine.com

**EDITORIAL AND PRODUCTION**

Editorial@SwimmingWorld.com

**Senior Editor - Bob Ingram**  
BobI@SwimmingWorld.com

**Managing Editor - Jason Marsteller**  
JasonM@SwimmingWorld.com

**Assistant Managing Editor - Annie Grevers**  
AnnieG@SwimmingWorld.com

**Graphic Designers - Emmi Brytowski, Joe Johnson**

**Staff Writers - Michael J. Stott**

**Fitness Trainer - J.R. Rosania**

**Chief Photographer - Peter H. Bick**

**SwimmingWorldMagazine.com WebMaster:**  
WebMaster@SwimmingWorld.com

**MARKETING AND ADVERTISING**

Advertising@SwimmingWorld.com

**Marketing Coordinator - Maureen Rankin**  
MaureenR@SwimmingWorld.com

**INTERNATIONAL CORRESPONDENTS**

Africa: Chaker Belhadj (TUN)  
Australia: Wayne Goldsmith, Ian Hanson  
Europe: Norbert Agh (HUN), Camilo Cametti (ITA), Oene Rusticus (NED), Rokur Jakupsstovu (FAR)  
Japan: Hideki Mochizuki  
Middle East: Baruch "Buky" Chass, Ph.D. (ISR)  
South Africa: Neville Smith (RSA)  
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**PHOTOGRAPHERS/SWTW**

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# LESSONS with the LEGENDS

SWIMMING WORLD  
CONTINUES A SERIES  
IN WHICH TOP  
COACHES SHARE SOME  
OF THE SECRETS OF  
THEIR SUCCESS.

BY MICHAEL J. STOTT

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## FORBES CARLILE



**PICTURED** > If Leonardo da Vinci was the personification of the Renaissance man—architect, inventor and scientist—then a good case can be made that Australian sports scientist, aquatic educator and coach Forbes Carlile is his 21st century reincarnation. Now 94, Carlile has “lived” swimming for 85 years and coached for 75. Along the way, he was a state backstroke champion (New South Wales), national-class marathoner and Olympic pentathlete. Speaking modestly, Carlile describes himself as “a university lecturer, research scientist, innovator, athlete, swimming coach and advocate for change.” He is also founder of a premier learn-to-swim system. In short, he is one of the world’s most revered proponents of the cradle-to-grave swimming lifestyle.

A formidable presence on deck, Carlile produced 52 Australian international team members—Olympians, world champions and Commonwealth Games swimmers—who set 31 individual world records. While he is often most associated with Shane Gould (three

Forbes Carlile developed many of his scientific training principles through self-observation and analysis. He says he owes much to Dr. L.M. Simmons, his long-term science master at The Scots College (Sydney, Australia), and mentor/professor Frank Cotton at the University of Sydney, who is recognized as “the Father of Sports Science” in Australia. Carlile also acknowledges the more recent influence of Dr. Brent Rushall, who coached with him at Ryde before becoming a distinguished sports scientist, prolific author and now a foremost proponent of Ultra-Short Race-Pace Training.

Carlile’s pioneering work on elite athlete training methods included the development of interval workouts and pace clocks (used as early as 1946 with his Palm Beach Ocean and North Sydney Olympic Pool groups), log books, heart-rate tests, training stress, tapering (used to prepare the 1948 Australian Olympic team), shaving down (1956) and T-wave studies of the heart action on the electrocardiogram. (The T wave on an electrocardiogram is an indicator of cardiac health. A flattened T wave is a reliable indicator of excessive stress in athletes who are overtrained, and indicates damage to the heart. In most cases, however, the cardiac damage can be reversed with rest.)

Forbes and his student—and later wife/coach—Ursula, continued his research that resulted in a number of training innovations. Those included testing for his concept of “failing adaptation,” a reliable indicator of overtraining and fatigue. He also showed that muscle temperature was closely related to performance and clearly important in the warming-up process. Such considerations prompted the use of pre-race hot baths/showers to raise body temperature and improve muscular performance.

Meticulous on-deck observation of swimmers, extensive use of underwater photography beginning in the 1950s, insightful scientific manuscripts (much of it with Ursula) and association with—and inspiration from—coaching legends such as Doc Counsilman, George Haines and Rushall produced volumes of seminal sports science literature. His book, “Forbes Carlile on Swimming” (1963)—with its study of tapering and the historical development of the crawl—was among the first modern tracts on competitive swimming. Among his other contributions are “A History of Crawl Stroke Techniques to the 1960s, An Australian Perspective” and “A History of Australian Swimming Training.”

Clinics have taken him around the world, including extended stays in mainland China, Japan, the USSR, Puerto Rico, Holland as well as North and South America. Those clinics, however, pale in comparison with the impact he has made through the Forbes and Ursula Carlile Swimming Organization. Operating on the north shore of Sydney since 1962, he, Ursula and his director/partners John Coutts and Richard Cahalan today have 500 full- and part-time coaches

— continued on 12

Olympic gold medals in 1972 and world records in every freestyle from 100 to 1500 meters plus the 200 IM), he also had five world record holders at Ryde Swim Club from 1967-73. In addition to Gould, they were John Bennett (800 meter free), Karen Moras (400 and 800 free), Gail Neall (400 IM) and Jenny Turrall (1500 free).

Carlile’s Australian Olympic resumé reads as follows: 1948 and 1956 swim coach, 1952 pentathlete and 1960 scientific adviser. In 1956, his Aussie Olympians—both men and women—won gold at every freestyle distance contested. In 1962, he also directed every Dutch swimmer to personal best times at the European Championships. Two years later, he took the squad to the Tokyo Olympics, where their women won two silver medals—100 fly (Ada Kok), 400 medley relay—and one bronze medal—400 freestyle relay. In 1973, he was head Australian coach at the first FINA World Championships in Belgrade, Yugoslavia.

[PHOTO BY KEVIN BERRY]

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implementing the Carlile Teaching System in the form of 25,000 weekly lessons from babies to Olympic swimmers in both Australia and the United States.

More recently, Carlile’s relentless railing against the old Aussie aquatic establishment ultimately ended in the acceptance of professional coaches on Australian teams and—more importantly—the adoption of an athlete-centered, coach-driven and administratively-supported national swimming structure. His constant criticisms to advance the needs of swimmers and coaches and to uphold the integrity and respect for the sport have not been lost on its ruling class. And for that, he has often been called “the conscience of Australian Swimming.”

Over time, he has been made a Member of the British Empire (1977) and been inducted into, among others, the International Swimming Hall of Fame (1977) and the Sport Australia Hall of Fame (1989). In 2003, ASCA presented him a Lifetime Achievement Award for “contributions to world swimming.” That same year, he and Ursula—a three-time national coach—were elected Life Members of Swimming Australia.

Carlile also was one of the key people at the forefront of the doping issue. FINA finally acknowledged the importance of the crusade against doping and genetic manipulation at the 1994 World Championships in Rome. “As a member of the Anti-Doping International Committee, with John Leonard and the late Cecil Colwin, I advocated, long and loudly, for FINA action, which was eventually successful. I also was a strong advocate for banning the ‘floating suits’ that plagued the sport for two years.”

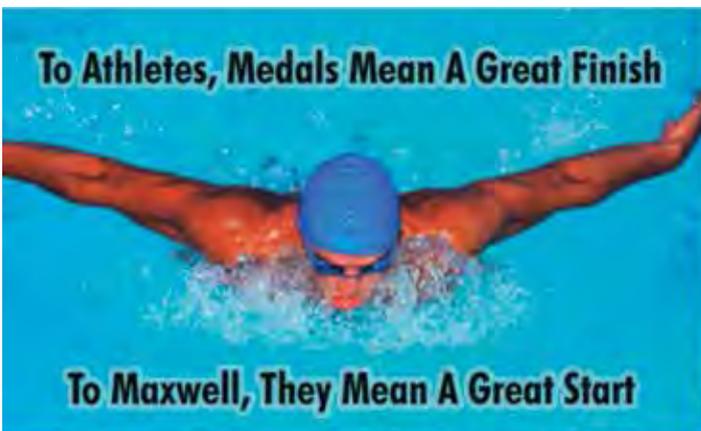
As one might expect from “a lion in winter,” Carlile advocates support of older potential Olympic athletes, but strongly believes that there should be a greater focus on scientifically developing



Forbes and Ursula Carlile have traveled all over the world for swim meets and clinics. On a trip to the United States in the late 1960s/early 70s, (from left) Forbes and Ursula Carlile visit with Coach Jim Montrella (then with Lakewood Aquatic Club) and *Swimming World* publisher, Al Schoenfield.

young swimmers from learn-to-swim programs by specialist coaches trained in child development. A man of yesterday and today, he continues daily mentoring of his highly successful Carlile, Cherrybrook-Carlile and Ryde-Carlile age group teams.. ❖

*Michael J. Stott is an ASCA Level 5 coach whose Collegiate School (Richmond, Va.) teams have won nine state high school championships.*



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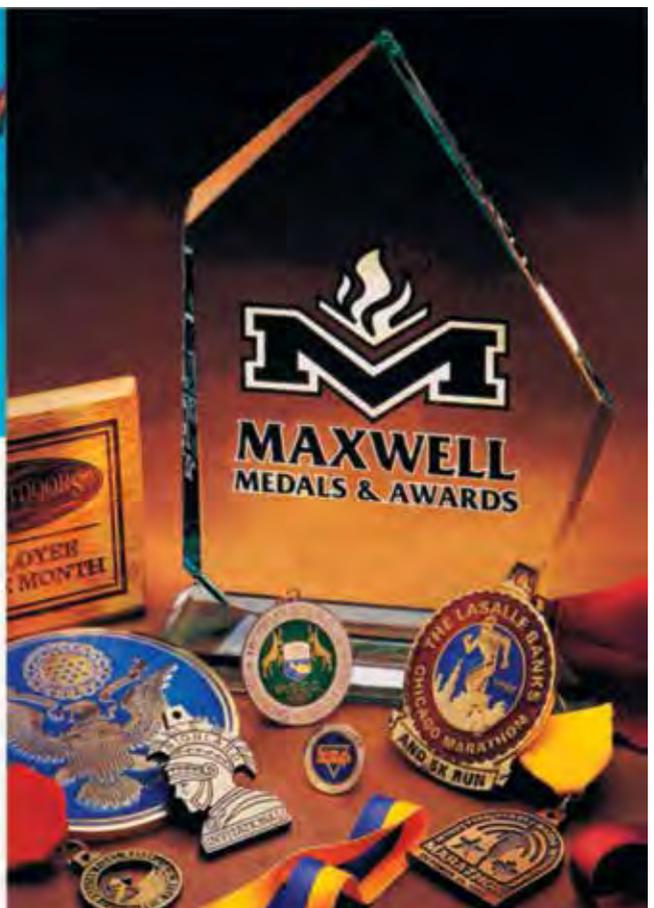
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SWIMMING TECHNIQUE  
MISCONCEPTIONS:

# SWIM THROUGH THE PAIN (Part II)

BY ROD HAVRILUK

*Many people believe that it is worth copying the technique of the fastest swimmers. In reality, even the fastest swimmers have technique limitations, but they offset them with strength and conditioning. The purpose of this series of articles is to address scientifically the technique misconceptions that have become “conventional wisdom,” and to present options that are more effective.*

*The last issue of Swimming World addressed the misconception that it is necessary to “swim through the pain” to optimize performance. It was summarized that whether a swimmer suffers shoulder pain from conditioning or injury, continuing normal training can negatively impact technique (and performance).*

*One key to managing shoulder pain is to address harmful technique before it causes injury. This article presents the characteristic technique elements that stress the shoulder on butterfly and freestyle to help swimmers and coaches identify problems before they become injuries.*

## CRITICAL TECHNIQUE ELEMENTS OF SHOULDER STRESS

Harmful technique elements on the butterfly and freestyle arm entry may initially cause only muscular soreness, but later progress to joint injury. It can be easier to care for swimmers' health if harmful technique is identified and corrected before that occurs.

Based on previous research on the arm entry in butterfly and freestyle (Becker & Havriluk, 2010, 2014), it is relatively straightforward to assess the potential for shoulder injury. A coach or swimmer can evaluate four key factors at the completion of the arm entry:

- Head position (depth of the head with respect to the surface of the water)
- Hand position (depth of the hand with respect to the shoulder)
- Neck angle
- Arm rotation

## BUTTERFLY SHOULDER STRESS INDEX

A summary of the butterfly stress factors is shown in **Fig. 1. (next page, top)**. The images of the biomechanical model in the top row show all four major harmful technique elements. The images of the swimmers in the bottom row show typical examples of harmful elements, but not necessarily all the elements for each stress level.

For butterfly, a coach can often evaluate three of the factors (head position, hand position and arm rotation) from the pool deck. The angle at the neck is usually difficult to evaluate without underwater video.

The position of the swimmer with minimum stress is rare. Her head is close

to the surface, and her hands are clearly deeper than her shoulders. The swimmer with moderate stress has a submerged head, and her hands are above her shoulders. The swimmer with maximum stress has the two stress factors of the swimmer with moderate stress as well as neck flexion and internal arm rotation.

## FREESTYLE SHOULDER STRESS INDEX

A summary of the major freestyle shoulder stress factors is shown in **Fig. 2 (next page, middle)**. The differences in all four harmful technique elements are smaller in freestyle than in butterfly, making evaluation from the pool deck more difficult. Coaches can make a quicker and more accurate evaluation with underwater video.

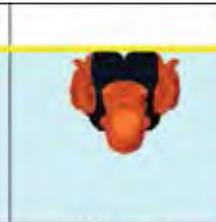
The swimmer with minimum shoulder stress has her hand slightly below her shoulder. The swimmer with moderate stress has her hand level with her shoulder. The swimmer with maximum stress has her hand above her shoulder.

## TIME OF EXPOSURE

In addition to the body position factors that cause shoulder stress, another extremely important factor is the “time of exposure”—i.e., the time duration that a swimmer's arm is in a shoulder-stressing position. The time of exposure is related to two factors:

- #1 The time a swimmer maintains the arm motionless in a stressful position;
- #2 The time a swimmer needs to move the arm from a more stressful position to a less stressful position.

For a freestyle example of #1, a swimmer may have a “moderate” stress

Butterfly Arm Entry				
<b>FIG. 1</b>				
	<b>Stress Level</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
	<b>Head Position</b>	Partially above surface	Below surface	Below surface and below shoulders
	<b>Hand Position</b>	Below shoulders	Slightly above shoulders	Completely above shoulders
	<b>Neck Angle</b>	Slightly extended	Neutral	Flexed
	<b>Arm Rotation</b>	Neutral	Some internal rotation	Considerable internal rotation
<b>Example</b>				

**FIG. 1 > (LEFT)** Positions of minimum, moderate and maximum shoulder stress in butterfly with differences in the relevant technique elements. Note the depth of the head with respect to the water level (yellow line) and the depth of the hands with respect to the swimmer's shoulders.

Freestyle Arm Entry				
<b>FIG. 2</b>				
	<b>Stress Level</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
	<b>Head Position</b>	Partially above surface	Below surface	Below surface
	<b>Hand Position</b>	Below shoulder	Level with shoulder	Above shoulder
	<b>Neck Angle</b>	Slightly extended	Neutral	Flexed
	<b>Arm Rotation</b>	Neutral	Some internal rotation	Considerable internal rotation
<b>Example</b>				

**FIG. 2 > (LEFT)** Positions of minimum, moderate and maximum shoulder stress in freestyle with differences in the relevant technique elements. Note the depth of the head with respect to the water level (yellow line) and the depth of the hand with respect to the swimmer's shoulder.

position and then needlessly maintain the arm in that position for 2-tenths of a second or longer (as in catch-up stroke). For a butterfly example of #2, a swimmer may require as much as 3-tenths of a second to move the arm from the “maximum” to the “minimum” stress position. A coach can first address the body position factors, and then work with a swimmer to reduce exposure time. ❖

*Dr. Rod Havriluk is a sports scientist and consultant who specializes in swimming technique instruction and analysis. His unique strategies provide rapid improvement while avoiding injury. Learn more at the STR website—[www.swimmingtechnology.com](http://www.swimmingtechnology.com)—or contact Rod through [info@swimmingtechnology.com](mailto:info@swimmingtechnology.com).*

## SUMMARY

*Evaluating the arm entry in butterfly and freestyle identifies the level of shoulder stress. Swimmers can then make adjustments to relieve pain. Reducing muscular soreness pain is likely to prevent injury pain. As an added bonus, arm entry improvements to minimize shoulder stress will also improve performance.*



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to learn more about the references for this article.

Who will shock the world of swimming in Rio? Is it someone we can anticipate if we take a deeper look into the backstory of past upsets? The understanding and appreciation of an Olympic upset can enhance our enjoyment of tracking athletes in the years, months and now days leading up to the 2016 Olympics.

Beginning with the November 2015 issue and running through July 2016—a month before the start of the Olympic swimming events in Rio on Aug. 6—Swimming World Magazine will bring you its top 9 upsets in the individual events in Olympic history—with an emphasis on the last 50 years. This month:

# #4

## SANDY NEILSON: THE LAST AMERICAN

BY CHUCK WARNER  
PHOTOS PROVIDED BY  
SANDY NEILSON-BELL



Sandy Neilson won three Olympic gold medals at Munich. A day after her upset performance in the women's 100 free (58.59), she led off USA's world record-setting 4 x 100 freestyle relay in 58.98. Four days later, she swam a 57.90 anchor on her team's 4 x 100 medley relay, which also set a world record. The American women finished the meet with eight gold medals and six world records.

The fabulous temple of swimming known as the “Texas Swimming Center” faded to the background when Sandy Neilson-Bell strolled down the pool deck at the 1988 Olympic Trials. During her 32 years, the blonde-haired, 5-8 woman had continued to carry herself with grace and elegance. Sandy’s smile beamed a magnetic light that outshined the white-tiled walls and drew athletes and coaches in her direction to greet her.

In a few hours, she would race in the finals of the 50 meter freestyle with the hope of qualifying for a second U.S. Olympic team. Sandy’s emotions separated her from the nervous climate, knowing she had been to the Olympics before—nearly half a lifetime ago.

### 1972 MUNICH OLYMPICS: SETTING THE STAGE

Sixteen-year-old Sandy Neilson looked around the small ready room and noticed how nervous all the girls seemed to be—even the great Shane Gould.

Gould was—and is—arguably the most dominant and versatile female swimmer who has ever lived. The Aussie is the only athlete in history to hold every freestyle world record simultaneously from the 100 through the 1500... as well as the 200 individual medley! Before she reached her peak at the 1972 Olympics, Shane had already set seven world records.

When the possibility of Shane winning four individual gold medals in Munich was discussed, her coach, the famed Forbes Carlile, remarked, “Why not five? She could easily win the 200 individual medley in addition to all the freestyle events.”

And on the first day in Munich—the day before the 100—Gould won the 200 IM in 2:23.07—a world record by nearly half-a-second!

As Sandy sensed the tension in the other swimmers before the 100, she thought to herself, “*Maybe if I’m not so nervous, I will have an advantage.*” She had lived her life one moment to the next, seldom getting ahead of the “now.” It was a habit that had served her well in the past and might in the present, as she waited with seven others to be called any minute to the pool deck of the glorious Munich *Schwimhalle*.

### EL MONTE, CALIFORNIA: FIVE YEARS EARLIER

Twice each week, Coach Don LaMont filled his car with swimmers and drove the 45 minutes to the beach. It was a bonding time for the young squad. Late in the afternoon, they returned for training at the El Monte Pool, located about 15 miles due east of downtown Los Angeles.

Sandy Neilson joined the team when she was 10 years old and methodically chased her goals to compete at progressively higher levels of competition. Remarkably, in three years at the age of 13, she was competing with a group of about eight teammates at the USA (then AAU) National Swimming Championships in Cincinnati, Ohio.

In April 1971, at 15, Sandy won her first national title by clocking 53.27 in the 100 yard freestyle. That performance qualified her for the Pan American Games to be held that summer in Cali, Colombia, where she learned a very important lesson.

Coach LaMont conducted a relatively high-mileage program (12,000 yards daily) and trained Sandy for a variety of events, including the 200 freestyle. At the Pan Am training camp, the coaches, viewing her as a sprinter, gave her much less work than she was accustomed. Concerned, she called Coach LaMont.

“What should I do?” she asked. The coach responded, “Sandy, you know what to do.” Don continued, “Find a time and a place to get in the work and sets you’re used to doing.” Coach LaMont’s confidence in Sandy elevated her own confidence and self-reliance, and it helped put her at ease.

In her first international competition, Neilson won the 100 meter freestyle (1:00.60) and added a gold medal in the 4 x 100 freestyle relay plus a silver medal in the 4 x 100 medley relay. The next goal was to qualify for finals at the Olympic Trials.



[PHOTO © SAINER, MUNICH, PHOTO NOP]

After Sandy Neilson won the 100 free at the Munich Olympics in 1972, the 16-year-old had just enough time to neatly comb her hair and step up to the award stand, wearing her navy-blue warm-ups. IOC President Avery Brundage then carefully draped a gold medal around her neck.

### OLYMPIC TRIALS AND CAMP

At the 1972 Olympic Trials, Jenny Kemp—who in the preliminaries just missed Shane Gould’s world record (58.5 from January at Sydney) with a time of 58.63—was victorious. Shirley Babashoff came from behind to outtouch Sandy for second, 59.23 to 59.38, as she had frequently done in local competition. But given the rules of the day in which three swimmers qualified for the Olympics in each event, Sandy was on the team!

Coach LaMont was thrilled with the wonderful milestone for Sandy, the El Monte Aquatic Club and their little town. Once again, Sandy

used her self-reliance to guide her training through the camp and prepare for the Games. She was a great kicker and knew she needed to keep up a significant level of work to be able to finish the second half of the 100 meters. This was especially important when one considered that two of the leading swimmers in the world in the 100 were Shane Gould and Shirley Babashoff, both world leaders in the 200, 400 and 800.

### THE RACE

The 100 freestyle finalists were called out onto the pool deck. Sandy Neilson was wearing her new sneakers that were given to the Olympic athletes. As she stepped onto the deck, she recently recalled the delighted feeling: “My new shoes felt so squishy on the soft deck!”

As Sandy began to walk out in front of the loud crowd inside the *Schwimhalle*, she was stunned by the scene, but stayed in the moment—at least at first. She passed a tour group of familiar faces sponsored by *Swimming World Magazine* and started to become nervous, but she reminded herself, “*If you stay calm, you will have an advantage.*”

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Sandy mounted the block in Lane 3, with Shirley Babashoff—the top qualifier—next to her in Lane 4 and Shane Gould over in 5. Neilson started quickly and surfaced in the lead. Through the first 50, she stayed out front—feeling as if she were “swimming on air”—and performed a quick turn. With 25 meters remaining, she acknowledged she was leading the two best finishers in the world, Gould and Babashoff. Her inner voice piped in: “Where is everyone?!” Sandy replied to herself with a familiar phrase that she and her teammates used: “Haul buns, Neilson. You can win this!”

Her thunderous kick picked up, and she touched the wall nearly a full body length ahead of the field.

Nearsighted, she could hardly see the scoreboard that read “58.59” next to her name, but she knew she had won because she watched the other girls finish—Babashoff in 59.02, just ahead of Gould at 59.06.

Don LaMont was at the beach with his swimmers, listening to the radio. They heard, “At the Olympics, an unexpected winner of the 100 freestyle, a local girl from El Monte, California, Sandy Neilson!” The group jumped for joy, got back into the car and drove straight to the Neilson home. Reporters, town officials and the mayor were already there. The hometown party started and didn’t stop until they greeted their surprise hero with a parade when Sandy arrived home.

In Munich, Sandy stepped up to the award stand, wearing her navy-blue warm-ups. In the short amount of time that had passed since the 100 free had ended, she had enough time to neatly comb her hair before IOC president Avery Brundage carefully draped a gold medal around her neck.

As “The Star-Spangled Banner” played, cameras flashed and captured her wiping away the tears of American pride from her face with a handkerchief that she had thoughtfully tucked up her sleeve.

Although Sandy returned for gold-medal ceremonies for the 400 medley and 400 free relays, *Life* magazine spread her image from the 100 throughout the world. Following that race, Shane Gould won the 200 and 400 freestyles in world-record times. However, Sandy Neilson’s upset nearly 44 years ago was “The Last American” woman to be crowned the outright Olympic champion in the 100 freestyle.

#### POSTSCRIPT

After the Munich Olympics, Sandy Neilson thought she had done all there was to do in the sport and retired from competition. But about 10 years later, she met her now husband, famed swimming psychologist Dr. Keith Bell, at a Masters swim meet. Sandy shared with Keith



When the news spread that Sandy Neilson had won the Olympic gold medal in the 100 meter freestyle, everyone seemed to gather at the Neilson home—friends, family, Coach Don LaMont, teammates, reporters, town officials and even the mayor! The hometown party in El Monte, Calif. started and didn’t stop until they greeted their surprise hero with a parade when Sandy arrived home with three gold medals. One of the family’s friends provided a banner to display at the local Chevron station, owned by Sandy’s dad, Chuck Neilson (right).



Sandy Neilson won her first national title in 1971 at Pullman, Wash. Her 53.27 in the 100 yard freestyle qualified her for the Pan American Games that were held that summer in Cali, Colombia. A happy Coach Don LaMont met Sandy after the race to offer his congratulations.

that she always wished she had kept on swimming and had gone for the world record. In fact, when Gould’s coach, Forbes Carlile, congratulated Sandy in Munich, he told her that she should own the world record because her Olympic time of 58.59 was electronically timed and Shane’s standing WR of 58.5 was hand-timed.

After Keith had heard the story, he “put a bug in Sandy’s ear” to go for it. “He was a tremendous support and encouragement,” Sandy recently said. “It may have seemed like a lofty goal at the time I returned to swimming, but setting a goal to break the world record was a good idea, as it took me on a most wonderful ride!”

In 1984, Sandy traded the opportunity of carrying the Olympic flag into the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum for the opening ceremonies in front of hundreds of millions of viewers to go quietly up the highway to Fresno and achieve a qualifying time for the U.S. nationals. At 28, she stood at the start next to one of the 13-year-old swimmers she coached. Nervous, her goggles filled up with water on her entry into the pool. Although she failed to qualify in the official race, she succeeded in a time trial.

At the 1984 Nationals, Sandy Neilson received the Comeback Swimmer of the Year Award. From there, she intentionally launched a new era of professional swimming, helping draw attention to the possibility of financially supporting American swimmers after college.

At the 1988 Trials, she swam the 100 freestyle faster at 32 years old—58.10—than she did in Munich when she was 16—58.59! She also placed sixth in the finals of the 50 free (26.04), coming close to making the Olympic team with a time that would have qualified for the finals at the

Seoul Olympics.

By 1996 when Sandy became the first 40-year-old to compete at the U.S. nationals, USA Swimming renamed its comeback swimmer award the “Sandy Neilson-Bell Comeback Swimmer of the Year Award” in her honor.

Perhaps forgotten by all those that earn a living in the USA as professional swimmers today, Sandy Neilson still walks the pool deck as a Masters and summer club coach. And each step is in the moment—a moment of grace, elegance and joy. ❖

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*Chuck Warner is a part of Swimming World Magazine’s editorial board and author of “Four Champions: One Gold Medal” and “And Then They Won Gold.” Both books are available for purchase online at [www.SwimmingWorld.com](http://www.SwimmingWorld.com).*

# 2015 TOP 12 WORLD MASTERS SWIMMERS OF THE YEAR

BY JASON MARSTELLER,  
ANNIE GREVERS,  
SEREN JONES,  
SOPHIA CHIANG AND  
HIDEKI MOCHIZUKI

**S**wimming World Magazine enters its 12th year of recognizing the Top 12 World Masters Swimmers of the Year. Following are the 2015 winners and runners-up (*swimmers listed alphabetically*):

**Top 12: Women**—**Charlotte Davis**, USA (65-69); **Jill Hernandez**, USA (55-59); **Cecilia McCloskey**, USA (65-69); **Christel Schulz**, GER (75-79); **Laura Val**, USA (60-64); **Shoko Yonezawa**, JPN (80-84).

**Men**—**Richard Abrahams**, USA (70-74); **Karl Hauter**, GER (90-94); **Thomas Maine**, USA (90-94); **Jim McConica**, USA (65-69); **Steve West**, USA (40-44); **Steve Wood**, USA (55-59).

**Runners-up: Women**—**Marie Therese Fuzzati**, FRA (50-54); **Emma Gage**, GBR (25-29); **Heidi George**, USA (35-39); **Janette Jeffrey**, AUS (65-69); **Sanderina Kruger**, RSA (65-69); **Margit Ohlsson**, SWE (70-74).

**Men**—**Fabio Calmasini**, ITA (45-49); **Cesar Cielo**, BRA (25-29); **Rick Colella**, USA (60-64); **David Guthrie**, USA (55-59); **Marcos Mattioli**, BRA (55-59); **David Radcliff**, USA (80-84).

The World Masters Swimmers of the Year balloting process is based on the Nov. 1, 2015 release of the FINA Masters world records set during the competition season of Nov. 1, 2014 through Oct. 31, 2015. Global standards were set in 161 events, on par with the 160 from the year before.

For voting purposes, only the swimmer ending the competition season with the world record was credited with breaking the record. Also, the final ballot only listed those swimmers who broke multiple world records (long course or short course), which totaled 20 women and 25 men—several more than last year when 14 women and 19 men accounted for the 160 records.

## OUR EXPERT PANEL

Five Masters swimming experts from around the globe served as *Swimming World Magazine's* selection panel:

- **Verity Dobbie, GBR**  
Great Britain Masters Committee chair
- **Rowdy Gaines, USA**  
Three-time Olympic gold medalist;  
multiple Masters world record holder
- **Annie Grevers, USA**  
Assistant managing editor of *Swimming World Magazine*;  
two-time Pan Am Games gold medalist; NCAA All-American  
[University of Arizona]
- **Skip Thompson, USA**  
Former USMS Coach of the Year
- **Phillip Whitten, USA**  
Former executive director of the College Swimming  
Coaches Association of America; former editor-in-chief  
of *Swimming World Magazine*

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## RICHARD ABRAHAMS, USA [70-74]

“No, I don’t feel 70—especially mentally,” Rich Abrahams said in a recent interview. Abrahams aged-up to the 70-74 age bracket a year ago March. He now owns world records in the 50-100 free, 50-100 fly and 100 IM (SCM) plus the 50 free and 50-100 fly (LC). He has set and reset all of these records two to three times.

Abrahams was a Big Ten champion in his years at Northwestern, but he was ready to break from the pool upon graduation.

“I took nine years off, went to grad school, worked, got chubby, smoked cigarettes,” Abrahams said. “Then I became a weekend warrior.” After years of fighting injuries from recreational basketball and football, Abrahams returned to the water. He swam in a local Masters meet and “was hooked almost instantaneously.

“The sense of community was extremely appealing—smart, athletic, good-natured people who are all goal-oriented,” Abrahams said.

In 2015, Richard Abrahams was gunning for each of the world records he set. “I’m a student of the sport. I’ve never set a record that I didn’t know.”

Abrahams trains six days per week, and his main training partner is 40. “I try not to bring up the age card, so I won’t yield to that temptation to back down,” Abrahams laughed. With a master’s degree in performance physiology, Abrahams is familiar with the energy systems he needs to engage.

“As I’ve gotten older, my feeling of gratitude has grown and grown,” Abrahams said. “I’m so lucky to have USMS, and will do whatever I can to support it. It’s become such a wonderful part of my life. The stuff I’ve accomplished is sort of gravy.” —A.G.



[PHOTO BY TREVOR BROWN FOR THE CHERRY CREEK ATHLETIC CLUB]

## CHARLOTTE DAVIS, USA [65-69]

2015 was a memorable year for 65-year-old Charlotte Davis. She set 15 world records and became engaged to her lane mate of 20 years, but it was not a year without speed bumps. In April 2015, Davis was diagnosed with breast cancer. After undergoing two lumpectomies and four weeks of radiation, Davis returned to the pool in July to train for USMS Nationals in August and two SCM meets in the fall.

“It was a real challenge to get back in the water and train,” Davis said. “The surgeries and radiation took a lot out of me. But I did not want the cancer to get the best of me, so the medical issues became a motivation for me to train harder.”

Davis downed six more world records after defeating cancer. Yep, she is a tenacious athlete. Much of Davis’ discipline was instilled in another realm of the aquatic world—synchronized swimming.

She was USA’s first synchronized swimming coach. At the 1984 L.A. Olympics, her two athletes, Candy Costie and Tracie Ruiz-Conforto, won gold as a duet. Ruiz-Conforto also won gold in the solo event. Davis rose in the ranks to national team director and served in that capacity through 2000.

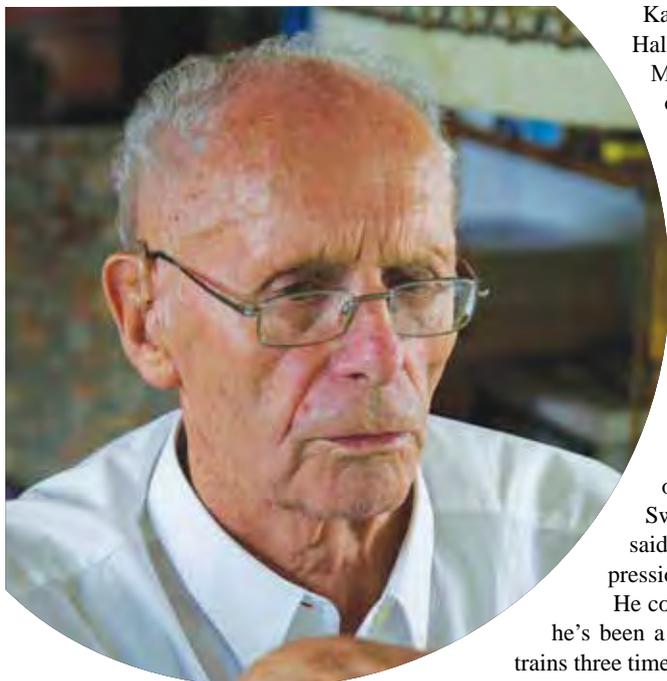
Davis was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 2014, the 30th anniversary of synchronized swimming’s inaugural appearance at the Olympic Games as a medal sport. She still serves on the international relations committee and the board of governors for USA Synchro, in addition to a technical committee that governs the sport in the Americas.

“I attribute much of my competitive success in swimming to my synchronized swimming background,” Davis said. “Synchro not only teaches you feel for the water, but body awareness, muscle isolation and engaging the core to assist with streamlining and breath control.”

The transition from synchro to swimming laps came about when Davis was 35, had mothered two children, and was looking to get back into shape: “I began swimming laps at our local recreation pool, and the Masters swim coach, Robin O’Leary, asked if I would like to join the Masters team.” She swam Masters for a week and was hooked. —A.G.



## KARL HAUTER, GERMANY [90-94]



Karl Hauter, a 2009 inductee into the International Masters Swimming Hall of Fame, was recognized as one of *Swimming World's* Top 12 World Masters Swimmers of the Year for the second time since first being honored in 2005.

“It was a very pleasant surprise, and I wouldn’t have thought it was possible due to my ‘slow times,’” Hauter said. “But regarding my world records, I can say that you just have to get old enough and swim respectably well to reach those records.”

He finished the 2015 competitive season with three long course Masters world records in the 90-94 age division: 100 meter free (1:37.68), 100 breast (2:05.18) and 200 IM (4:27.72).

Hauter has quite a story to tell about his early years of swimming. He taught himself how to swim when he was 5 “in the stream of our water mill.” The kids in the neighborhood called him “Water Rat.”

“At 14, I surprisingly finished second at a competition, and a coach of the team, Blau-Weiss Pirmasens, recruited and worked with me. Swimming was pushed into the background due to war times,” Hauter said, but he still trained during World War II—“I got a lot of positive impressions from the USA and its citizens as a prisoner of war.”

He competed much later in life at the 1973 German Masters Nationals, and he’s been a regular at the World Masters Championships since 1986. Today, he trains three times a week.

“I train on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays in our lovely pool, the ‘Pub’ in Pirmasens,” Hauter said. “Every session I swim 600 meters freestyle, 600 meters breaststroke, 600 meters backstroke and a 200 meter butterfly. At the end of every 600, I do the final 100 meters as a sprint. After training, I relax in the hot tub.

“For me, swimming is the ideal sport to work on my stamina, strength and mobility, and to stay fit even into an older age.” —*J.M.*

## JILL HERNANDEZ, USA [55-59]



PICTURED > Jill Hernandez (right) with oldest daughter, Sarah

Unlike many of her fellow Masters Swimmers of the Year honorees, Jill Symons Hernandez did not swim in college.

Despite always having a love for the sport—and learning how to swim with the Chico Aqua Jets in northern California at age 7—Hernandez, instead, competed in cross country and track during her college years. Still, she is well aware of the advantages that come with the four-year chlorinated experience: “Four of my five children have been college swimmers,” said Hernandez, whose youngest daughter is a junior swimmer at Purdue. “College swimming creates lifelong bonds and provides valuable life lessons. My children’s commitment to academics as well as their sport was and still is amazing.”

The 55-year-old currently holds Masters world records in the women’s 55-59 400 and 800 meter freestyle (4:46.69, 9:46.56) as well as the 200 IM (2:38.74).

She also has set Masters records in the women’s 45-49 age group (400 IM, 5:27.67, 2005) and four in the 50-54 division (200 free, 2:13.18, 2013; 400 free, 4:40.66, 2013; 100 fly, 1:07.80, 2011; and 400 IM, 5:30.32, 2013)—three of which are still standing (50-54 200-400 free and 100 fly).

However, Hernandez claims that “the experiences I remember the most are those where I have had great swims and have also felt the support of others before, during and after my races.

“Masters is a great sport, and I am now competing with my oldest daughter, Sarah. I am wired to train hard most days. Since I’ve gotten older, it is the daily workout that makes me click.” —*S.J.*

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## THOMAS MAINE, USA [90-94]

Thomas Maine proves that age is just a number. The 90-year-old holds four Masters world records in the men's 90-94 age group in the 200 meter breaststroke (5:12.25), 100 and 200 fly (2:23.56, 5:19.18) and 400 IM (9:59.43).

Despite his taking a 30-year break between his college and Masters swimming careers, Maine's wife, Shirley, claims that her husband's life has always been about swimming: "Tom has swum in a number of different countries—New Zealand, Italy, Sweden—and across the United States. We plan our vacations around his swim meets."

The former Iowa State swimmer, who now resides in Carbondale, Ill., expressed his gratitude for becoming one of *Swimming World's* Top 12 World Masters Swimmers of the Year for the second time (he was also selected in 2010).

"I'm very surprised," said the St. Louis Area Masters swimmer. "It's an honor to be named among the leading Masters swimmers in the country and the world. It's nice to be recognized."

Despite having fond memories of college swimming, Maine admits that he prefers the Masters system.

"In college swimming, you're always part of a team and only receive recognition if you're No. 1," he said. "In Masters, you swim individually against the clock, so you get more individual recognition."

Maine is training for the 2016 U.S. Masters Swimming Spring National Championships in Greensboro, N.C., where he hopes to receive more individual recognition. —S.J.



## LAURA VAL, USA [60-64]

One of the most decorated Masters swimmers of all time, Laura Val continues to impress and inspire.

In fact, Val has been selected to *Swimming World's* Top 12 World Masters Swimmers of the Year list for an unprecedented 10th straight year.

She seems to do the impossible time and time again, turning in faster times in the women's 60-64 age group than she was swimming five years ago! In 2015, she set the SCM 100 freestyle world record in 1:03.48 plus two LC global standards in the 50 and 100 backstroke (33.86, 1:14.76).

Then in the first month of 2016 after moving to her new age division—women 65-69—Val proceeded to take down four Masters world records in *one race* at the 2016 Olympic Club Masters 1500 Swim Meet in San Francisco! En route to a Masters WR of 20:21.61 for the 1500, she also set Masters marks along the way with her splits at 200 (2:25.41), 400 (5:06.74) and 800 (10:34.67) meters.

When asked about her goals for the coming year and new age group, Val replied, "My goals in 2016 are to have fun in this new age group and to stay healthy."

"Once I started Masters swimming, I've never stopped. I love having swimming in my life—it's fun and keeps me young and healthy. I look forward to every practice and every competition." —S.C.



## JIM McCONICA, USA [65-69]



By being named one of *Swimming World's* Top 12 World Masters Swimmers of the Year for the sixth time, Jim McConica broke a tie with Hitomi Matsuda and Karlyn Pipes-Neilsen for the second-most appearances on the list. Only Laura Val—who was recognized again in 2015—has more with 10.

McConica was first selected for the honor in 2005 and has since been a World Masters SOY in 2006, 2010, 2011, 2012 and now 2015. This past season, he set five world records in men's 65-69 freestyle: two short course (800 and 1500—9:53.06 and 19:05.66) plus three long course (400, 800 and 1500—4:56.47, 10:11.30 and 19:33.36).

"I am honored to be selected as one of the top Masters swimmers," he said. "This year has been pretty good regarding my pool records, but I am most proud of three open water events.

"First was kayaking six miles and supporting my wife, Michelle, in an ocean swim; and second was completing my fourth solo Catalina Channel swim (a little more than 20 miles). I am now the oldest to conquer that channel.

"The third (swim I am most proud of) was a six-person relay swim from San Nicolas Island to Los Angeles (that totaled) 70-plus miles." The swim was covered—twice!—by the *New York Times*, and McConica's team was the first to complete any swim from that island.

"The camaraderie keeps me coming back," says McConica. —S.C.

## SHOKO YONEZAWA, JAPAN [80-84]



[PHOTO PROVIDED BY SWIMMING MAGAZINE TOKYO]

Japan's Shoko Yonezawa was selected as one of *Swimming World's* Top 12 World Masters Swimmers of the Year for the third time, having also been honored in 2005 and 2010.

Yonezawa capitalized on the opportunity of aging-up into the women's 80-84 group in 2015, setting Masters world records in the LC 50 and 100 breast (47:59, 1:45.71).

"It went really well," Yonezawa told *Swimming World*. "It went pretty much as I had planned it. I (hope to have) many chances to break records in the breaststroke in my 80s—particularly in the 200 breaststroke."

Yonezawa, who was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame this past year as an Honor Masters Swimmer, swims with the Big-S Sunway Yokohama club. However, she usually travels from pool to pool to experience something new every day.

She swims five times a week. On Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, Yonezawa swims from 2-4 p.m. and does about 800 to 1,000 meters. On Sunday, she often goes to a 50-meter pool to swim a mile with her friends. Mostly, she trains freestyle, and her favorite sets are 10 x 50 meters and 3 x 100 meters.

"Aging-up to 80, I have a bit of issues with my legs, so after swimming, I walk in the pool about 200 meters every time. I also go to massage two times a week," Yonezawa said.

She continues her conditioning efforts with nutrition and a lot of rest.

"I sleep from 11 p.m. until 7 a.m., plus I take a nap after lunch. I eat a lot of vegetables, and yogurt is another food that I put on my plate almost every day," she said.

Yonezawa sees swimming as a way to combat the effects of aging.

"Unfortunately, my physical strength has been weakening year by year. I feel it. But most important is to continue to really enjoy life. Meeting friends and traveling to swim meets are fun, and that combination of things is why I am still pumped up to be living today," Yonezawa said. —H.M.

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## CECILIA McCLOSKEY, USA [65-69]

Cecilia McCloskey is a backstroke powerhouse who keeps picking up speed.

After a two-decade break from swimming, McCloskey returned to the sport about two years ago...thanks to her brother, Steve Dougherty.

"I kept talking about how I'd like to go with him and do a Swim Trek vacation in Croatia," she remembers. "He said, 'Well, I don't know how you're going to do this if you don't even swim anymore.' So I cut out running and boxing, and I started (swimming again)."

It didn't take long before she was setting world records. This past season, she set three Masters global marks in the women's 65-69 50, 100 and 200 meter backstroke (36.79, 1:20.95, 2:57.78).

"I am happy with how my year of swimming has gone," she said.

As for her meteoric rise, McCloskey remarks, "Getting back has been an adventure to say the least. I really didn't allow for any expectations. At 66, I am not missing the fact that it's great to be so healthy!"

As for future plans, McCloskey says she would "like to travel to Seoul, Korea to compete at the World Masters in 2019. My son will be married there, and I think it would be a really fun and fulfilling way to experience Korea." —S.C.



## STEVE WEST, USA [40-44]

You may know Steve West's name from the 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2012 Olympic Trials. West narrowly missed qualifying for the U.S. Olympic team in 1996, coming in third in the 200 meter breast (2:14.96) and fourth in the 100 breast.

In 2015, swimming in the men's 40-44 division, West set three SCM Masters world records—50, 100 and 200 breast (28.52, 1:01.42 and 2:13.72)—and one LC—200 breast (2:18.57).

West was an All-American in his years at the University of Michigan. After graduating in 1995, he headed back to his home club in Irvine, Calif. to train under Coach Dave Salo for a year prior to the 1996 Olympic Trials. After Trials, West hopped out of the pool resolutely and began his career in computer software.

"By the fall of 1996, I really didn't like the way I felt (out of shape), and I talked to Dave about it," West said. "He encouraged me to continue swimming with his team and making the practices I could."

From 1997-2000, West launched his software company, got married, and continued swimming on the side. He chose not to focus exclusively on 2000 Trials because he "would have been 28—which was *really old* at the time." West managed to make the 1997 Short Course World Championships team and earn a silver medal at the 1999 Pan American Games. Not bad for a side gig!

But after 2000 Trials, West stepped back. In 2003, a daughter came along, and in 2005, a son. West's priorities were far from the pool, but he stayed in shape by surfing and lifting. In 2009, a stressed and fatigued West was given a doctor's order to get back in the pool. "Sure enough, swimming Masters helped with all of the physical challenges I was having," West said.

In 2012, 39-year-old West became the oldest male in history to qualify for Trials...and he did so by accident—in hot pursuit of Nick Gillingham's 35-39 Masters world record.

Twenty years after nearly making the Olympic team, West is gunning for his fifth Trials appearance—not with hopes of making the team, but of making history...again.

West has yet to attain a 2016 Olympic Trials cut, but he's within an eyelash. Last summer, the breaststroker went 1:03.81 in the 100 (OT = 1:03.69) and 2:18.57 in the 200 (OT = 2:18.39).

He'll be aiming to punch his Trials ticket in May. West will be 44. But the only digits he tends to take note of are those on the pace clock. —A.G.



PICTURED > Steve West with daughter, Summer

## STEVE WOOD, USA [55-59]



Steve Wood is as quick to give credit to others as he is for getting from the starting blocks to the finish of his 50- and 100-meter backstroke races.

He is the Masters world record holder for men 55-59 in those two long course events (29.07, 1:03.50). But when he was told that he had been selected one of *Swimming World's* Top 12 World Masters Swimmers of the Year for his accomplishments in 2015, he immediately gave credit to everyone but himself:

"I am truly blessed by the support of my coaches and friends," said the former Auburn Tiger. "My coaches throughout my life have laid the foundation for any success (I've had) in the water. I owe this honor to them—along with my wife and family—for allowing me to pursue my passion."

Wood, 55, has been in the water for more than 30 years, but he took a 19-year break between his college and Masters careers. Despite his success, he admitted that returning to the pool was more difficult than he had anticipated.

"A lifelong friend and coach of mine, Chuck Burr of Team Ridglea (Fort Worth, Texas), had been talking about starting a Masters team for several years. Chuck and I—I was his only swimmer—finally did so, and I lasted only 30 minutes of our first practice that was supposed to be an hour long. I cut the practice short with my now memorable quote, 'If I go any further, I'm going to puke.'"

Wood, who works as an orthodontist "to help support his swimming addiction," also claims that his type of unique workouts greatly contributed toward his success in 2015: "My training was very inconsistent, and I think that ended up being the key. Instead of swimming every day, I'd swim every other day or have two to three days between practices. I think that it actually gave my body more time to recover and heal so I could move on to the next practice and put more into it."

Wood is happy to be swimming again: "(Swimming Masters is) far more fun than college. College athletes 'have to,' but Master swimmers 'get to' or—even better—'don't want to'...which is the ultimate Masters swimmer's prerogative!" —S.J.

## CHRISTEL SCHULZ, GERMANY [75-79]



PICTURED > Christel Schulz (right) with Japan's Yohiko Osaki, whom she calls her biggest rival

Germany's Christel Schulz earned Top 12 World Masters Swimmers of the Year honors for the second time, having first been selected in 2005 and finishing as a runner-up in 2010 and 2011.

Swimming in the women's 75-79 age division, she set six Masters world records in 2015: three short course (50 free, 34.58; 100 and 200 back, 1:33.68 and 3:22.68) and three long course (100 and 200 back, 1:35.14 and 3:28.42; 50 fly, 40.06).

"I feel honored, and I'm proud that, even at an older age, I belong with the best Masters swimmers of the world," Schulz said upon being informed that she made the list.

Schulz has a storied history in the sport of swimming as a 2011 inductee into the International Masters Swimming Hall of Fame. She's broken nearly 50 Masters world records, and she swam for the East German national team at the 1956 and 1960 Olympic Games. She retired from the sport after 1960, but returned to Masters swimming at the German Masters Championships in 1994. She's been swimming and breaking records ever since.

"All my love belongs to swimming. It is like a second family," Schulz said. "I'm swimming because it's fun and it's my passion, and I never would have thought that you can achieve so much even when you're older. Thanks to swimming, I saw the world with other people doing and feeling the same. It's fun, it's bringing me joy, and it keeps me young."

Schulz typically trains in a short course meters pool three times a week, doing 2,500 meters each workout. When she is training for the World or European Championships, she joins a local team that has access to a long course pool. —J.M. ❖

# MOMMA ON A MISSION

Dana Vollmer is many things: Olympic gold medalist, former world record holder in the women's 100 fly, wife, mom, daughter, swimming enthusiast—and after retiring from the sport after the London Olympics and giving birth to a son, Arlen, in March 2015, the 28-year-old is back in the pool and has her eyes set on Rio.

BY ANNIE GREVERS



[PHOTO PROVIDED  
BY THE GRANT FAMILY]

**A**s a child, Dana Vollmer tried soccer. She did not like it, but finished out the season. In her stint as a gymnast, Dana broke her arm. Her mother, Cathy, had her go back to gymnastics after the injury had healed. Before she could hang up the leotard, Dana needed to be able to complete the arm-breaking move without fear.

"You do not let something make you quit," Dana recalled the lesson from her upbringing. The mantra became Vollmer's M.O.

After tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in her knee in a middle school basketball game, teenage Vollmer delayed surgery until after swimming in the 2002 summer nationals, which served as Trials for the 2003 Pan American Games. Doctors said it would take six to seven months to recover. Vollmer was back in the pool in three months.

"Dana has an incredible ability to translate the bad in the situation into a good," husband, Andy Grant, said. "It isn't like she grits her teeth and forces herself to see the good all the time—she just doesn't see the bad."

In 2003, Vollmer's heart began pounding out of her chest sporadically. There were times when Vollmer's heart rate hit 180 in practice, then skyrocketed up to 250 beats per minute. Testing revealed that Dana had an extra electrical pathway, which caused her heart to race. A surgeon cauterized the extra sparkplug. The arrhythmia concerned doctors who thought she might have long QT syndrome—a heart rhythm condition that can potentially cause fast, chaotic heartbeats in response to exercise or stress. LQTS also can produce an extended QT interval, which can cause fainting spells and even sudden death!

There were two options: have someone ready with a defibrillator at every practice and meet...or quit swimming. Dana chose Option A. Her parents made a ritual of carrying the defibrillator to practices and meets. By Vollmer's sophomore year in college, routine screenings showed there was no longer reason for concern.

## RETIRING

A decade after her high school health problems, Vollmer was not associated with fragility, but with sheer power and dominance.

At the 2012 London Olympic Games, Vollmer hit her stride—annihilating the competition en route to Olympic gold in the 100 meter fly (55.98), while sneaking under Sweden's Sarah Sjöström's world record (56.06). Vollmer collected two more golds in the 4 x 200 free relay and the 4 x 100

medley relay (in world record fashion).

Her "final" Games were brilliant—a seemingly perfect way to exit the aqua world and enter the "real" world.

"I decided I was done in the fall of 2013," Vollmer said. "That was a hard decision—I was really happy with London, and I wasn't that motivated to continue pushing my body."

Longtime Cal-Berkeley women's head coach Teri McKeever has worked with Vollmer since she transferred from the University of Florida in 2006.

"When she said she was done, I said, 'That's the right decision, but don't sign the retirement papers,'" McKeever recalls, referring to the nine-month period an officially retired swimmer must sit out before entering USA Swimming competitions again.

Vollmer started to move on. She studied interior architecture and design. She and her husband began getting the itch to start a family. The couple shopped for a house in suburbia. Vollmer found out she was pregnant in June of 2014.

Thirty weeks into her pregnancy, Vollmer began having labor contractions and was put on bed rest...for seven weeks. That's a long stretch of time for anyone, but exceptionally hard for a girl who was accustomed to hours of high-intensity exercise every day.

Dana and Andy's little boy, Arlen, arrived on March 6, 2015—one week late—taking an agonizing 22 hours to enter the world. It was a difficult pregnancy and delivery, but Vollmer is well acquainted with hurdles in life.

Vollmer put on 50 pounds with baby Arlen and was anxious to get her body back—eager to fine-tune her instrument once again.

"That was the biggest thing I missed—I've always loved figuring out things about my body—different ways to interpret technique, figure out how to move through the water," Vollmer said.

After the 2014 Pan Pacific Championships, McKeever told Vollmer, "If you ever want to give this another go, I'm all in."



In addition to winning the 100 fly at London, Dana Vollmer also captured gold medals in the women's 400 medley and 800 freestyle relays. Here, Vollmer (center) and her teammates Shannon Vreeland, Allison Schmitt and Missy Franklin celebrate their 800 relay triumph with a team hug.

The mom-to-be was heavy with fatigue in her first trimester. "I know what being tired means," Vollmer assured, "but I have never been so tired in my life. I would take four-hour naps every day. It's like I was in Christmas training, but I wasn't doing anything."

— continued on 28

*Swimming World* ran this photo in its special Olympic issue (*SW* Oct 2012) with the following cutline: “The USA’s Dana Vollmer obliterated the opposition in the women’s 100 fly, becoming the first woman to break the 56-second barrier with a 55.98. After representing the United States at the 2004 Olympics in Athens, Vollmer missed out on a chance to race in Beijing. Her gold medal in London was the completion of a journey back to the sport’s elite level.”



A 57.64 had been the winning 100 fly time at Pan Pacs. Coach and swimmer took note: the world was not catching up to Vollmer’s stand-alone 55.

In the middle of her bed-rest term, Vollmer could not endure another moment of sitting idle. She drove down to watch her Cal Bears’ dual meet against rival Stanford in January 2015. McKeever had seen Vollmer off and on during her pregnancy, but at this meet, she witnessed a mental shift.

Vollmer gave Milt Nelms, swimming’s “water whisperer,” a call shortly thereafter.

### SELF-DISCOVERY

At 12, Vollmer was the youngest participant at the 2000 Olympic Trials. At 16, Vollmer qualified for the Olympic team and won gold in Athens as part of the 4 x 200 free relay. At 20, she failed to qualify for the 2008 Olympic team. It was an emotional slug to the stomach.

McKeever chatted about her heartbro-

ken swimmer with well-respected colleague, Milt Nelms. “We both felt like Dana couldn’t be in Granbury, Texas (her hometown), watching the Olympics. Nelms said, ‘Have her spend time with me, and it will put everything in perspective—get her away from feeling sorry for herself.’”

Nelms had started a learn-to-swim program in Fiji. Rather than swim in the Beijing Olympic Games, Vollmer taught children how to swim off the breathtaking Fijian coast.

“My entire world had become about making the team,” Vollmer said. “Nelms took me out of that self-absorbed place, and showed me I could use the skills I had to teach and form relationships—that’s so much bigger than competitive swimming.”

McKeever has seen superstars get their identities wrapped too tightly around swimming feats.

“I’ve been blessed to work with a lot of athletes at a high level—their performance defines too much of what they think of themselves as a person,” McKeever said. “They have way more to offer the world than medals and world records.”

Vollmer had always felt that McKeever cares about her swimming, but always cares more about who she is as a young lady.

“One thing I’ve always loved about Milt and Teri—they put you in situations that allow you to have these self-discoveries. They knew they were putting me in a place to discover a life skill that would be really empowering to me,” Vollmer said.

### BECKONED BACK

In January of 2015, Vollmer looked at what the Americans were going in the 100 fly and dared to think, “*I don’t necessarily have to go a 55 to make the U.S. Olympic team. Let’s just see if I can be competitive with Kelsi Worrell.*”

Vollmer began asking the man who helped resurrect her swimming career in 2008: “What do you think? Do you think I can come back from this? Can you start thinking of things for me to do after Arlen is born?” Nelms was excited about the prospect.

It was a no-brainer for McKeever to have Vollmer back in the water with the Golden Bears. “I always joked that if a bird fell out of the nest, Dana would be the one to nurse it back to health. Dana has always been that way on our team—she has a huge interest in helping people in our program,” McKeever said.

Vollmer’s mother-in-law serves as an aquatics director for a pool in Livermore, Calif., not far from Andy’s and Dana’s residence in Danville. Vollmer began driving her new baby son to the pool three times per week, and swimming while Grandma fawned over her grandson.

Husband Andy thought his wife’s yearning to swim while pregnant might have been stir craziness, but “when she got up and went to a practice at Cal three months after Arlen was born, that was when I knew I hadn’t seen the last of Dana Vollmer, the swimmer.”

McKeever would send Vollmer emails to alert her of scheduled recovery workouts.

“It was strange. During my first workout, I stopped and told Teri, ‘My body feels huge and my arms are like toothpicks.’ I was realizing, ‘*I have a long way to go.*’ In my head, I was thinking, ‘*I’m still that person who went a 55.*’ but physically, I couldn’t even do a 200 pull!”

Those first weeks back were more complicated than training had ever been, but McKeever had forewarned, “It’s not going to look how it looked before...”

Vollmer nursed Arlen, drove 40 minutes to Cal with a nanny, nursed again in the locker room, trained while the nanny sat with Arlen, then nursed Arlen in the car before driving back home. Practice was a process.

### AN OLYMPIC HOBBY

Vollmer has added days and minutes to her practices since last May. “I just do mornings, then strength training or Pilates afterward,” she said.

Among the oddest things about return-

ing to training as a mother are the activities that replace the (often pined-for) three-hour naps of the past. Vollmer chases Arlen around, takes him to the park and attends “Cuddle Club,” which she describes as, “a circle of moms with their babies at the library, learning songs, moving their (the babies’) arms around.” To conclude each Cuddle Club meeting, a bag of toys is dumped in the center of the mom circle, and it’s a baby free-for-all.

No, Vollmer’s identity is no longer muddled in the waters of how she performs. “I have the life I have always wanted,” she said. “I hear moms talk about getting your ‘me time’ to be a better mom. Training is my ‘me time,’ then I have the rest of the day with my son.”

In the last decade, McKeever has never seen Dana more at peace or more comfortable in her life.

“She is emotionally filled up in a lot of different places outside of her swimming,” McKeever said. “The swimming thing is kind of cool, but other things are more important.”

With her in-laws nearby and her parents just a few hours away in San Luis

Obispo, Vollmer feels enveloped by a loving support system.

Andy mentioned that most twenty-somethings living to eat, sleep and swim would be feeling footloose—but as a collegiate and newly professional swimmer, Dana never had that mentality. She stressed about the future. Contrarily, “most married people with a mortgage and kid—and a major career highlight within reach—worry about consistent income, saving for their child’s education, etcetera,” Andy said. But again, Dana defies the norm.

“Yes, we are planning for Arlen’s future,” Andy said. “But Dana also has been just living in the moment—there’s this confidence that she knows what she needs to do and has the power to do it.” There is nothing more to prove because she has achieved a life she loves.

“Arlen might not even remember me swimming,” Vollmer said. “He has his whole life to look forward to—that opened my eyes to what matters most. I don’t want the pressure, the fear of letting people down—it’s become about my own journey and my love of figuring out my body.”

But taking on this refreshed, swimming-

as-a-hobby perspective has not come easy. The Olympic gold medalist is used to a high-pressure occupation. She has to snap herself out of that do-or-die mindset now.

At January’s Arena Pro Series in Austin, Vollmer found herself thinking, “*I need to be here, close to Sarah (Sjostrom).*” Then she took a step back and thought, “*Wait a second, I don’t need to be anywhere. I am where I am, and that’s OK.*”

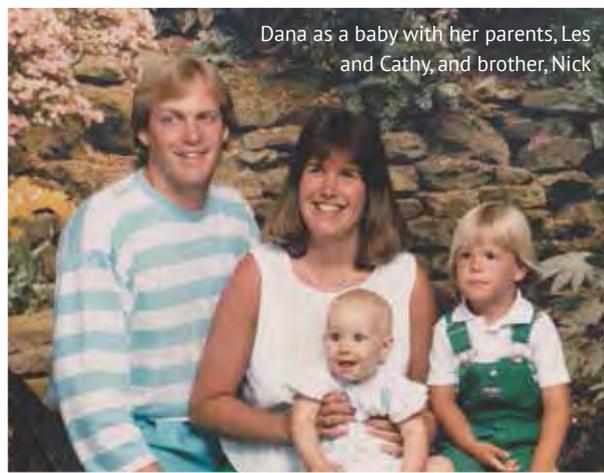
Sjostrom won the 100 fly in Austin, breaking Vollmer’s U.S. Open record from 2012 with a 56.38. The “momma on a mission” touched second with a 57.61—her fastest time since pre-Arlen.

Vollmer went out with a bang in London, so she does not feel there’s anything she *needs* to do in Rio, but does hint at one goal: “It was hard to see my world record get broken (55.74 by Sjostrom in 2015). But I’d rather be the chaser than the chased. I want to get fast enough so it’s a legit race.”

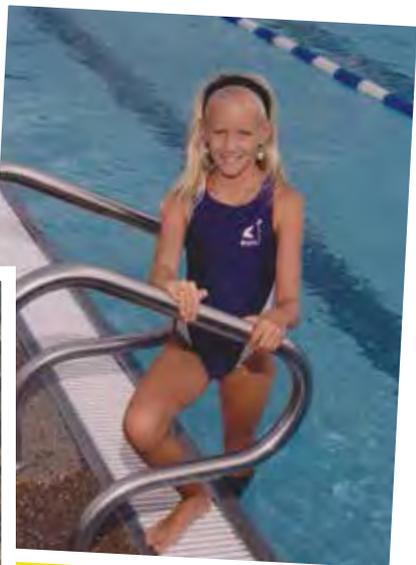
America’s 6-foot-1 butterfly has caught wind of Olympic predictions declaring Sjostrom as the “guaranteed” gold medalist in the 100 fly. Vollmer says with credence—“I don’t want that to be a guarantee.” ❖

## DANA VOLLMER THROUGH THE YEARS

[PHOTOS PROVIDED BY THE VOLLMER FAMILY]



Dana as a baby with her parents, Les and Cathy, and brother, Nick



(From left) Nick and Dana



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[PHOTO BY JAY ERICSSON]



# GABE WOODWARD'S OLYMPIC PRAYER

BY CHUCK WARNER

After Gabe Woodward graduated from USC in 2001, it seemed that his swimming career was over. For nearly two years, he didn't race or train. But his strong faith brought him back to the sport in 2003. He prayed that he would be able to honor the Lord by humbly fulfilling the potential he had been given as an athlete. With that prayer, his dream of making the 2004 U.S. Olympic team began to unfold.

People say that Bakersfield, Calif. is an hour-and-forty minutes away from *anything* and 1:45 away from *everything*. The miles of cotton fields and oil wells have never fostered a lot of swimmers, especially of Olympic caliber. Thus, it may be fitting that a transplant from Connecticut named Dave Reilly walked into the life of 13-year-old Gabe Woodward and helped him spawn an Olympic dream.

Coach Reilly's challenges for greater commitment, mileage and competitive experience brought Gabe results quickly. In ninth grade, his 200 yard freestyle improved from 2:02 to 1:45, and by his senior year of high school in 1997, his times (45.3 in 100 yards and 52.7 in 100 meters) made him a sought-after college recruit. He chose the University of Southern California, led by one of the most successful coaches in the sport's history, Mark Schubert.

At USC, Gabe made many contributions to the team, becoming an All-American four times and being elected team captain his senior year. But his top performances of 43.6 (100 yards) and 51.2 (100 meters) came in 1999 as a sophomore.

At the international level, Woodward won a bronze medal in the 4 x 100 meter freestyle relay at the World University Games in 1999. Gabe had qualified for the 2000 U.S. Olympic Trials, but he finished 46th in the 50 meter free and 56th in the 100.

By the fall of 2001, Gabe graduated from USC. His swimming career seemed to be over. In January 2002, he enrolled in Masters College in Valencia, Calif. to earn a master's degree in Biblical counseling. "I really wasn't looking to counsel anyone but me!" He was deeply troubled by what he perceived to be his lack of accomplishment in his swimming career. A devout Christian, he often prayed for reconciliation after not meeting his potential as an athlete.

In one of his classes, he met Staci Smith. They shared a strong Christian faith, quickly fell in love and in December of 2002, they were married. Staci worked as a college enrollment counselor, while Gabe began working for Morgan Stanley and pursued his "securities certification," which requires passing a test called the Series 7. Passing the exam was required to continue his employment. He also took a step closer to the sport he loved by beginning to swim twice a week.

Gabe took the Series 7 test and failed. The young unemployed husband drove home with tears streaming down his face to see his new bride. He felt like he had failed as a swimmer...and now in his work. In the emotional conversation that followed, he

confessed to Staci, "I always felt like I could make the USA Olympic swim team." She responded, "If you think you can, I think you can."

### PURSUING THE DREAM...AGAIN

The Olympic Trials were 15 months away, and Gabe Woodward hadn't raced or trained in nearly two years.

In May of 2003, the Woodwards moved to Orange County so that Gabe could join the Irvine Novas, train with Coach Dave Salo, and every day at practice, race some of the best sprinters in the world. Staci commuted three days a week to Valencia and worked the rest of the week at home. Their income was meager, but enough to pay their monthly team fees to Nova and live a spartan existence.

The results of the speed-based program came quickly. During mid-summer competition, Gabe met the Trials qualifying standard in the 100 (51.09). At nationals in early August at the University of Maryland, he placed sixth with a time of 50.07.

Although many of America's best swimmers had skipped the nationals for international competition, Gabe's performance suggested he had a chance to make the 2004 Olympic team.

Every day at practice for the next 11 months, Gabe trained with intensity he had never approached before, spurred on by racing great sprinters such as Jason Lezak and Scott Tucker. Sets such as 9 x 100s wearing paddles and fins, every third one fast, allowed him to swim extremely fast. As Trials approached and the amount of rest between efforts ballooned to two minutes or more, he could swim long course times from a push-off that were faster than he had ever swum in his life: 48, 47, 46....

### U.S. OLYMPIC TRIALS

The 2004 Olympic Trials setting was spectacular. A state-of-the-art above-ground pool and a 17,000-seat stadium were erected in a parking lot by the bay in Long Beach, Calif. The weather cooperated beautifully, and the Woodward family converged on Long Beach with high expectations, knowing that he had the opportunity to vie for one of the six relay spots in the 100 freestyle.

The preliminaries did not go well. After his morning swim of 50.54, he approached the results board with Jason Lezak. Jason told him, "I don't think you made it (into the top 16 semifinals)." Jason was first, and they scanned downward to find Gabe: 14th—his Olympic dream was still alive!

A walk on the beach with Staci was part of a relaxing break before the semifinals. Calls from his friends over when to purchase tickets left him confused, and the prospect of starting back to work on the Series 7 test the next day flashed through his mind. But he had another chance that night to demonstrate his ability.

In the ready area, Gabe pulled on his suit. But a disagreement with his coach over which manufacturer's suit to wear added a last-minute challenge. The announcer introduced him before the race, saying, "Swimming unattached...Gabe Woodward." Gabe calmed

Hasty Awards provided the 2004 Olympics Trials medal awarded to Gabe Woodward for his sixth-place finish in the men's 100 freestyle. Woodward qualified for the USA Olympic team that competed in Athens, where he swam in the prelims of the men's 4 x 100 free relay and won a bronze medal.



himself after he heard his new status of being without a coach or a team... all alone. Or was he?

The strength of Gabe's faith could never leave him alone. It was his faith that had brought him back to the sport and urged him to frequently repeat his prayer "to honor the Lord by humbly fulfilling his potential."

### TIME TO RACE

The sunset was reflecting into the California sky that Gabe grew up, trained and raced under, creating a glowing blue dome over the outdoor swim stadium. On the first 50, Gary Hall Jr. flew out to the lead, and over in Lane 1, Woodward trailed by a body length. But Gabe stormed back on the second 50. He touched and found his time on the scoreboard: "49.67." He had placed third in his semi heat, sixth in the total semifinals and just 3-hundredths of a second faster than the ninth-place finisher. He would race again!

The following evening, swimming in the finals in Lane 7, Gabe Woodward produced a similar result when he charged home the second length. He stopped the clock at 49.45—a lifetime best just when he needed it. The time was good enough for sixth place and earned him a spot on the 2004 Olympic team!

Fulfilled? Sort of. Ecstatic? Not exactly.

The next day, Staci asked why he didn't seem more excited. Gabe considered the limited results in the sport by his hard-working friends, his brother, Beau, as well as his years of unrewarded effort at USC, and responded, "My prayer has been that I honor the Lord by humbly fulfilling the potential I've been given."

Gabe then searched for a phone number. Dave Reilly had moved back to Connecticut, and Gabe began to call...no answer. The next night...again, no success. Finally after many efforts—over several nights—he reached his coach who helped him forge his Olympic dream. He profusely thanked him, his wife, Debbie, and over a lengthy conversation, they celebrated his achievement together.

\* \* \*

About four weeks later, Gabe sat in the ready room for the preliminaries of the 400 free relay in Athens with his three veteran Olympic teammates, Nate Dusing, Neil Walker and Gary Hall Jr. Woodward looked at them and said, "This is the Olympics, and we're representing the United States of America." They said, "We know." Gabe nodded and said, "I just want you to know that I know."

### POSTSCRIPT

In 2008, Gabe Woodward returned to the pool four times each week during his lunch breaks to train about 4,000 meters. Utilizing the high-intensity program he had learned from Dave Salo, Gabe finished eighth in the 100 freestyle at the Olympic Trials in a lifetime best time of 48.94. Today, a father of four children, Gabe is a senior financial adviser for Wells Fargo and owner of the Bakersfield Swim Academy in his hometown. He is also head deacon of counseling at his church. ❖

*Chuck Warner is a part of Swimming World Magazine's editorial board and author of "Four Champions: One Gold Medal" and "And Then They Won Gold." Both books are available for purchase online at [www.SwimmingWorld.com](http://www.SwimmingWorld.com).*

[PHOTO BY LEO MASON, US PRESSWIRE]

The USA's David Boudia, who won the Olympic gold medal in the 10-meter platform diving competition at the 2012 Olympics, most recently captured the silver medal in the same event at last year's World Championships in Kazan. Since 2007, he's won 10 international medals—three gold, four silver and three bronze.

## RIPPING TOWARD RIO

Ten of 24 Olympic medals were awarded to Chinese divers in 2012. In their home country's 2008 Beijing Games, Team China took home 11 medals, sweeping gold in all but the men's 10-meter platform. In 2004, China captured nine of 24 medals; in 2000, 10 of 24. Winning nearly 42 percent of all available medals over the past 16 years, China's Olympic diving dynasty shows no signs of being usurped in 2016.

BY ANNIE GREVERS

### WOMEN'S DIVING

China looks especially dominant on the women's side. FINA rankings have them first in both the springboard (3-meter) and platform (10-meter) synchronized events. Twenty-five-year-old Zi He will return to defend her synchro springboard Olympic title from 2012. Zi He trails teammate Tingmao Shi by less than a point in individual springboard world rankings. She took home silver in the event in 2012, and will be looking to clinch gold in her second Games.

Two Canadians have a viable shot to topple China's dominant duo—Jennifer Abel will edge the Chinese on degree of difficulty, and Pamela Ware has the prowess to challenge for a medal.

Top contenders in women's platform (10-meter) are the young, yet well-established stars Ren Qian (age 15) and Si Yajie (age 17) of China. Ren clenched silver at last year's World Championships in the event. Si won gold as a 14-year-old at the 2013 World Championships in Barcelona.

### MEN'S DIVING

Great Britain's Jack Laugher competed in his first Games at 17, finishing 27th in his premier event—the 3-meter springboard. The 21-year-old will have momentum as he dives for gold in Rio. Laugher became the first Brit to win two medals (both bronze) at the World Championships in 2015.

Laugher is ranked first in the world in the springboard event, but China's He Chao is hot on his heels. "He Chao is the Chinese leading man, but recently he has been faltering in international competition," U.S. national team diver Samantha Pickens said, mentioning that

many Chinese divers struggle in outdoor competitions. "Rommel Pacheco of Mexico is also extremely dominant on the men's 3-meter."

"The Star-Spangled Banner" played one time during the London Olympic Games, when veteran David Boudia squeaked into finals and dived his way to a Cinderella story on platform (10-meter). Qui Bo of China took silver, and Great Britain's Thomas Daley grabbed bronze. The three will most likely be returning to the lofty platform in Rio—Qui is ranked first in the world and will be looking to continue China's gilded legacy.

Two-time Olympian Boudia will also likely be returning to the synchronized platform event—this time with budding American star, 19-year-old Steele Johnson. As Pickens says, "They still have Trials, and you never know what can happen." The U.S. Diving Olympic Trials will take place June 18-26 in Indianapolis. In 2012, Boudia won bronze in the men's 10-meter synchro event with the since-retired Nicholas McCrory.

China will bring strong synchronized teams on platform, but the springboard events are there for the taking. Mexico, Great Britain and Germany will bring formidable pairings in men's synchronized 3-meter. "If these teams can dive their best, then China will definitely be beaten," Pickens said. ❖

**FUN FACT:** Jamaica has springboarded into the Olympic diving scene for the first time in history! Yona Knight-Wisdom sealed his ticket at the FINA Diving World Cup Meet in February.



TOTAL ACCESS MEMBERS CLICK HERE  
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Malaysian diver Pandelega Rinong.

[PHOTO BY ANDREA NIGH]



**At** the 2012 Olympic Trials, University of Cincinnati grad ('10) Josh Schneider was confident he would make the Olympic team in his premier race, the 50 freestyle. Schneider went fast enough in prelims (22.21), then dropped more time in semifinals (21.81), then went even faster in the finals (21.78). But his fastest wasn't fast enough. He finished fourth—18-hundredths shy of qualifying for the U.S. Olympic team.

"I went through a nine-month depression," Schneider recalls. Then one day, while watching the movie, "Good Will Hunting," Schneider snapped out of it. "It spoke to me."

Schneider related to the main character, Will Hunting—an incredibly gifted guy who just wanted the simple life. "I was like that in 2012—my friends were all getting real jobs, working nine-to-fives, but I missed out on that as a swimmer. I was envious, so I tried doing that as well as trying to be an Olympian."

In the film, Will's best friend from south Boston worked construction with him. Will, the reluctant genius, had never thought of a different future for himself. "You're sitting on a winning lottery ticket," his friend points out. Josh related—he was feeling like he was sitting idly on his gift.

Schneider lost a big hand at 2012 Trials, but was finding the courage to ante up again. "I put all my chips on the 50 free; I didn't train for the 100 mentally," Schnei-



As Schneider walks out and gets situated behind his block, he stretches and awaits his introduction.

Then the announcer may say, *In lane four, Pan American Games gold medalist and former American record holder, Josh Schneider....* "I listen to see if the crowd likes me or not, so I can feed off that. If I get support, I appreciate that. If I don't hear anything, I tell myself I have to earn it."

—Josh Schneider

Three-time medalist at 2015 Pan American Games (1 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze) and five-time medalist at 2010 and 2014 Short Course World Championships (2 gold, 1 silver, 2 bronze)

der said about 2012. At this watershed moment, the sprinter thought, "I gotta get through this, and if I try again, I have to go all in."

**MONTHS BEFORE A RACE**

Words stick with Schneider, so he adds them to his arsenal for mental brawn. "I research quotes or sometimes just stumble upon them," he said.

When he finds one that speaks to him, he scribbles it on a dry erase board in his kitchen. The swimmer's recent mantra are words of legendary football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant: "It's not the will to win that matters...everyone has that. It's the will to prepare to win that matters."

This mental massage was missing from his regimen in 2012, and Schneider will not be arriving in Omaha this June for the 2016 U.S. Olympic Trials merely hoping to make the team. He has every start, stroke, turn and finish already mapped out.

**HOTEL**

On race day, Schneider wakes up from his afternoon nap and steps into the shower for a revitalizing mid-day wake-up. "In the shower, I start to let myself be optimistic about racing. I talk to myself; convince myself I can win. I formulate a game plan, and I visualize executing it. I imagine the commentator talking about me. After I see myself win, I shut it down."

— continued on 34

**WARM-UP**

Upon arriving at the pool to warm up before finals, Schneider does some “activation” outside of the water—stretching and moving around to “find what’s rusty, so I can tweak my warm-up to address the problem areas,” he said.

Then Schneider will work on a few strategic elements that he may not have executed well in preliminaries. “I’ll practice a turn and a breakout with a high tempo; get that feeling, so I know how to find that pocket when I race.” After the fine-tuning is complete, Schneider pulls on his racing suit and phases into the rallying chapter of the pre-race story, listening to “very aggressive” music.

**READY ROOM**

The ready room evokes intense emotions for Schneider. His mind cues his “inner demon—the ugly one—the one I usually don’t want to bring out.” But the aggressor is welcomed right before an all-out effort.

“There’s not always a platform to give everything you have—where you’re en-

couraged to fight with all you have. I like to let loose, be mean, be aggressive,” Schneider said. And this is how we can tell Schneider is of the sprinter species—those who love to bottle up adrenaline and uncork it all at once.

The mental games in a ready room are whirling—all eight swimmers typically trying to stay in their own head or psyche out their competition. Schneider does a little of both. He peers around the room and tries to look at each person and remind himself of “one thing that he’s better than them at.” He allows those thoughts to bolster his confidence. “The more adrenaline I can get, the better,” Schneider said. “But lately, I hardly get butterflies, because the only thing I truly care about are the Olympics.” The sprinter doesn’t like this trend. He wishes he could conjure up a body packed with adrenaline at every meet.

After finding a stable foundation of confidence, “I close my eyes and envision the whole race. I envision walking out, my start, easy speed if it’s the 100 free, then coming off that wall—I imagine coming out of the breakout and being in the fight. At that point, I’m talking to myself, chal-

lenging the pain, calling myself out,” Schneider recounts.

When the pain is too tangible to be thrown aside, Schneider personifies it. “I’m fighting against *that* as I’m racing.” The more energy he exerts, the closer he gets to winning the epic battle against “Pain.”

Schneider knows that the moment he allows himself to think “ouch” is the moment his body will instinctively let up. It’s the mind’s natural reaction to pain that Schneider tries to talk himself out of through the remainder of the race.

**BEHIND THE BLOCKS**

Time check—Schneider has not raced yet! All of that was a mental preview of what’s to happen in the next two minutes.

As Schneider walks out and gets situated behind his block, he stretches and awaits his introduction. Then the announcer may say, “*In lane four, Pan American Games gold medalist and former American record holder, Josh Schneider...*”

“I listen to see if the crowd likes me or not, so I can feed off that,” he said. “If I get support, I appreciate that. If I don’t hear anything, I tell myself I have to earn it.”

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Schneider reminds himself of his race strategy and prepares to unleash—knowing his fiercest opponent will be dense pain that floods his body in the form of lactic acid in those final meters.

“I won’t lose my race to the pain; I won’t back down to it.”

The long whistle sounds. ❖



## JOSH SCHNEIDER

- New York Athletic Club
- Age 28, 6-4, 220 pounds
- Won 50 meter free at 2015 Pan American Games (21.86)
- Three-time medalist at 2015 Pan American Games (1 gold, 1 silver, 1 bronze)
- Five-time medalist at 2010 and 2014 Short Course World Championships (2 gold, 1 silver, 2 bronze)
- NCAA champion (50 yard free, 18.93, 2010)
- Former American record holder (SC 50 meter free, 20.88, 12-15-10 thru 10-21-12)



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WITH  
**NATALIE  
COUGHLIN**

BY ANNIE GREVERS and  
TASIJA KOROSAS  
PHOTOS BY NATALIE COUGHLIN

Pull up a chair at Natalie Coughlin's training table, and discover a sample daily menu in the iconic Olympian's words. *Swimming World's* nutrition guru, Tasija Karosas, provides the nutritional explanations.

PICTURED >  
Natalie  
Coughlin

[PHOTO BY JD LASICA]



Natalie Coughlin did not become a 12-time Olympic medalist by chance. She made a series of choices that led her to her first, second and third U.S. Olympic teams. One of the most difficult choices swimmers need to make is choosing healthful food over what's convenient—which is made especially difficult by the gut-twisting, ravenous hunger that strikes after a long workout!

Coughlin had been spoiled with her mom's excellent cooking before becoming a Cal Golden Bear in 2000. "A year of dorm food made me desperate to start cooking," Coughlin said. That was around the time Food Network began to gain momentum, so while Coughlin didn't quite know what she was doing in the kitchen, she lapped up televised advice from the pros.

The necessity of knowing how to cook flourished into a new passion. After realizing that herbs cost a fortune, Coughlin started a small herb garden on the fire escape landing of her apartment. She eventually expanded her herb space and added a lemon tree to the family.

"When I bought my first house, I knew I wanted a proper garden," Coughlin said. It was in her first "proper garden" that Coughlin "made a ton of mistakes" in the process of teaching herself the art of growing her own food.

The next step to sustainability was acquiring chickens (yes...*chickens!*). Coughlin had always wanted chickens, but it took reading the book, "Animal, Vegetable, Miracle" by Barbara Kingsolver, to push her to a "That's it! We're doing it" commitment. Coughlin has been raising chickens for five-and-a-half years now, so every egg in her omelette is as local as they come.

With last season's torrential downpours (thanks, El Niño), much of Coughlin's garden had to be ripped out. The silver lining is that she gets to do a total garden overhaul with the help of landscaping experts—"We're going to turn the entire yard into an edible yard." If you're like me, Wonka's sugar-coated garden pops to mind. This is the Olympic, healthful version of that. With eight years of gardening know-how, Coughlin's thrilled to start anew this year.

During Cal's training camp at the Olympic Training Center in January, Coughlin led the Cal men to the kitchen and taught them "how easy fish is to make." Chef Coughlin walked the 18- to 22-year-old guys through the simple steps of making teriyaki salmon, sauteed greens and a side of rice. She rated the Golden Bear amateurs' fish and greens as outstanding, but said their rice-making has room for improvement.

As intimidating as Coughlin's tactics might sound—i.e., raising your own crops and chickens—the hobbyist chef insists eating healthy doesn't need to be complicated.



### PRE-PRACTICE

(Early morning...4:15 or so)

On Sunday, I'll make a big batch of really good steel-cut oatmeal with ground flax seeds, sliced almonds, maple syrup, cinnamon, vanilla and coconut oil (for fat). Microwave as needed.

**Why It's Good:** Eating a breakfast high in carbohydrates after you wake up and before you jump in the pool is a perfect way to restore glycogen stores after a long night's rest. Adding almonds and coconut oil provides a small amount of healthy fat and protein to fill your stomach so you are ready to take on workout.



## POST-MORNING PRACTICE

Omelette with fresh herbs, leftover veggies from the night before, whole-wheat toast (with fried egg on top), coffee.

**Why It's Good:** After practice, it is important to restore your muscles with energy lost during workout. Having a big breakfast high in carbs and protein does the trick. Eggs will add protein, and the toast will add carbs to help your muscles refuel and rebuild so you can be fully prepared for your next practice. A healthy breakfast will also jump-start your metabolism!



## EARLY AFTERNOON

*(Pre-12:30 Lift)*

Not a big lunch—green smoothie with kale, parsley, banana, avocado, celery, lime juice, lemon juice, pineapple, Luvo entrée (frozen healthy food, great option for on-the-road—my current favorite is vegetable bibimbap), fried rice with vegetables with kimchi (top with fried eggs for extra protein).

**Why It's Good:** Keeping a light and simple lunch is always the way to go. A fruit-and-vegetable smoothie will add vital nutrients to support you through a workout. An easy microwavable entrée is a great choice because it is small, but provides the proper balance between carbs, fat and protein. Amy's Kitchen makes great frozen entrées as well!



## POST-AFTERNOON PRACTICE

Smoothie with almond milk, chia seeds, dark frozen cherries, half banana, sometimes non-fat Greek yogurt.

### **Why It's Good:**

As an athlete, fueling recovery is one of the best things you can do for your body. A smoothie allows you to add all your recovery food into one tasty drink. The two most important ingredients to recovery are protein and carbohydrates. Adding Greek yogurt to a smoothie provides the protein. Mixing any types of fruit to help flavor the smoothie will provide carbohydrates. Note that cherries have strong anti-inflammatory properties. Drinking a cherry juice or even eating cherries will decrease inflammation to your muscles.

## SNACKS

Whole almonds, herbal teas, dark chocolate.

**Why It's Good:** A swimmer's body is in constant need of energy. It is important to consume small snacks along with your three main courses. A handful of nuts added sporadically throughout the day can help sustain energy. Dark chocolate is a great way to satisfy your sweet tooth, while also providing your body with nutrients and happiness!



## DINNER

Quality protein, lots of vegetables, really big salad. I often eat farro—an ancient wheat, popular in Italian cooking, boiling like grain or like risotto, really nice texture. I'll make a big batch of it to keep in the fridge. You can also add it to a salad to make it more filling.

**Why It's Good:** After a long day of swimming and weights, it is crucial to have a large and nutritious dinner in order to recover and refuel. A whole and healthy grain such as farro can help restore lost energy. Always be sure to add 20 to 25 grams of protein to your grains and lots of vegetables. Vegetables provide many different nutrients important to our bodies. These nutrients allow us to stay healthy and perform at our best. ❖

SWIMMING WORLD PRESENTS A QUARTERLY SERIES THAT SHOWCASES MOMS AND DADS OF SWIMMERS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY.



PICTURED >  
Jessica Hardy and Denise Robinson



# MOMS AT MEETS

## DENISE ROBINSON— JESSICA HARDY'S MOM

BY ANNIE GREVERS

**W**ith 28 international medals to her credit, Jessica Hardy has been among the world's elite swimmers for nearly 11 years—since winning three silver medals at the 2005 World Championships in Montreal. In 2008, she was suspended due to a positive drug test later found to be the result of a tainted nutritional supplement. The suspension kept her off the U.S. Olympic team and caused Hardy and her family hardship they could have never anticipated.

But she came back stronger than ever the following year, made the U.S. Olympic team in 2012, and she now has her eyes set on Rio.

Through it all, Jessica has had a strong mother by her side, Denise Robinson. Denise shared some gems of knowledge from her years as a swim mom to Jessica and her younger sister, Amanda.

**As a former college swimmer yourself, did you ever fight the urge to coach your girls?**

I don't remember ever having an urge to coach the girls. During the high school swim season, Jess and I had a game where I'd make up personal best times and make finger signals to her as she was walking up to the blocks. If she made the time or went faster, I'd reward her with some small treat that varied from a special dessert to a few dollars. She was more into the game of it than the reward—I guess you could say that was before the time mattered.

**What advice would you give to new swim parents?**

I feel very strongly that the best advice is to let your child experience the wins and losses, ups and downs, themselves. I personally think that having a coach relationship where someone else who is kind of in the parenting role is important in building trust and confidence with adults. The whole issue with personal responsibility is huge for me. I always encouraged both the girls to figure out what they wanted from the sport and their coaches, and to do their best to make that happen. Of course, we're all going to hopefully be supportive as parents and enjoy the swim meets and appreciate the fact that swimming is a family affair for everyone.

**How has the sport of swimming shaped Jess' character?**

I can hardly remember her NOT swimming, as she started with those neighborhood summer leagues when she was 5. Obviously, swimming has given her discipline, friendships, drive, goal-driven ambition, competitiveness, Dominik (her husband, a Swiss Olympian whom she met at Cal-Berkeley), passion, heartbreak, resilience and a host of other qualities that certainly can and will be translated into the "real world." I'm so proud of the fact that she appreciates her talent and that she has worked hard in the sport and gives back to the next generation. ❖

*"Moms at Meets" and "Dads on Deck" is a quarterly feature sponsored by TRI SWIM about swim parents for swim parents.*

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# MEDICINE BALL AND STRETCH CORDS WORKOUT

BY J.R. ROSANIA

PHOTOS BY EMMI BRYTOWSKI

DEMONSTRATED BY

CARL MICKELSON AND SUSIE PAUL



**1 STRETCH CORD BICEP CURL**  
While holding the handles of the stretch cord, begin the exercise with both feet standing on the cord to create resistance. Perform a standard bicep curl, and alternate arms.



**3 STRETCH CORD BUTTERFLY PULL**  
With the cord attached to a pole or a piece of equipment, bend over and assume a butterfly position. With both arms fully extended into the catch-and-pull position, perform a full stroke.



**2 STRETCH CORD UPRIGHT ROW**  
Standing on the cord again, perform an upright row with a high-elbow finish. Alternate arms.



**4 MEDICINE BALL SQUAT TO A VERTICAL STREAMLINE JUMP**  
While holding a med ball chest-high, perform a deep squat. Then thrust upward and jump off the floor, throwing the ball vertically and creating a streamlined body position. Retrieve the ball and repeat.



**5 PLANK MEDICINE BALL ROLL**  
Begin in a plank position with a med ball out in front of your body. Extend one arm forward and begin to fingertip-roll the med ball down to your hip, imitating a freestyle stroke pull. Roll the ball back up to the starting position, and repeat with your other arm.

In the March issue of *Swimming World*, we learned several exercises with TRX suspension straps that correlate to different body positions in the water during stroke starts and push-offs.

This month, I follow up with another series of both functional and swim stroke-simulated exercises. These exercises will continue to build core strength, leg and arm strength, and some swim muscle strength.

I have chosen a medicine ball and stretch cords for this workout. Choose between a 6-to-12-pound med ball, and yellow or blue stretch cords (find a lesser tension). These tools can be used in hundreds of exercises, and I find that some are very useful for swimmers.

Also, no gym is necessary—you can do these exercises at home, work or on deck at your pool.

Start with one set of 15 repetitions of each exercise, and add a set every one to two weeks until you are doing three sets of 15 per week. Discontinue exercises seven to 10 days before a major competition.

Next month, look for more functional and stroke-specific exercises that you can do away from the gym. ❖

## MEET THE TRAINER

J.R. Rosania, B.S., exercise science, is one of the nation's top performance enhancement coaches. He is the owner and CEO of Healthplex, LLC, in Phoenix. Check out Rosania's website at [www.jrhealthplex.net](http://www.jrhealthplex.net).



## MEET THE ATHLETES

Carl Mickelson swam for the University of Arizona. As a senior, he finished fourth in the 100 and 200 yard breaststroke at the 2012 NCAA Division I Championships.

Susie Paul has been a Masters swimmer for the past 10 years.

## NOTICE

All swimming and dryland training instruction should be performed under the supervision of a qualified coach or instructor, and in circumstances that ensure the safety of the participants.



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# BRAD SHIVELY

BY MICHAEL J. STOTT

Now in his 16th year as head coach at Washington University in St. Louis, Brad Shively has taken his men's and women's NCAA Division III teams from a tie for 46th and 15th in his first year at the helm to sixth and eighth, respectively, in 2015.

**Q. SWIMMING WORLD:** *After swimming at Kalamazoo, who influenced you to pursue a career in college coaching?*

**A. COACH BRAD SHIVELY:** My father was a coach, so I've been around it my entire life. Another influence was my college coach, Bob Kent. Bob always made you feel valued. He took an interest in what you did outside the pool and pushed you to be better than you thought you could be. He had an amazing understanding of the team concept, and he let everyone know we were competing for something bigger than ourselves.

I never thought about being a coach until after college. Knowing how much my father enjoyed coaching and working with Bob helped me realize it was a great career choice.

**SW:** *What are some obstacles to attracting excellent athletes to a premier Division III academic institution?*

**BS:** I have been very fortunate to have the opportunity to work at such an amazing institution with so many outstanding people.

Finding student-athletes as excited about academics as they are about athletics is critical. The process typically starts with athletes already being interested in Washington University. You need to identify young men and women who are excited about balancing and excelling in both. Our student-athletes set high expectations for themselves and their teammates, and have a strong belief that they can accomplish their goals. — continued on 43

[PHOTO BY DANNY REISE/WUSTL PHOTOS]



**Coach Brad Shively**

Head Coach  
Men's and Women's Swimming  
Washington University in St. Louis  
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## HOW THEY TRAIN:

# REED DALTON

BY MICHAEL J. STOTT

[PHOTO BY DANNY REISE/WUSTL PHOTOS]



### PROGRESSION OF TIMES

	2013	2014	2015
100 Yd Fly	48.33	48.37	46.97

A four-time NISCA All-American and a systems science and engineering major, Reed Dalton evinces all the qualities a coach would want in a senior team captain.

He is a competitive and emotional perfectionist, a two-time first team CSCAA Scholar All-American and a vocal leader. He is also an NCAA D-III record holder and 2015 100 yard fly champion (46.97), 11-time All-American and a menacing relay presence. At last year's NAAs, Dalton finished sixth in the 200 fly (1:48.07) and picked up four A-A citations, recording the fastest fly splits of the meet on the 200 (21.04) and 400 (46.66) medley relays. He also added 20.40 and 45.55 splits in the 200 and 400 free relays.

Much of Dalton's success has surfaced because he "is one of the most focused young men we've had at WashU," says his coach, Brad Shively. "He is unique in that he enjoys the details of swimming—whether it be discussing minute details on head breakout position or his need for improved underwater kicking."

The Texas native has not always been a lethal kicker. "At the NCAA Championships his freshman year, he finished fourth in the 100 fly with almost zero underwater dolphin kicking," says Shively. "We showed him video, and from then on, he committed to a kick number and distance standard. He also dropped the 100 free in favor of concentrating on the 200 fly, adding volume and increased underwater kicking (eight to 10 meters) to bolster team scoring.

"Reed is an animated young man. He is über-competitive and really looks forward to the biggest stage and competing against the best swimmers. He sets high expectations for his teammates and even higher expectations for himself. At practice, in the weight room and at meets, he holds his teammates accountable.

"At the NCAA Championships last year, he continuously stressed to the team that details such as warming down and keeping emotions high during races could make a difference in our meet. By Saturday, he had led us to a sixth-place finish," says Shively.

### SAMPLE SETS

"Reed does not train as much butterfly as some of our other flyers because he trains freestyle very well," says Coach Shively. "As a result, he is able to train with the freestyle group during threshold sets. His butterfly training tends to be during shorter anaerobic sets."

#### Early Season Workout (SCM)

##### Focus: 10-meter kickout on all fast swims

- 4 x 25 fast butterfly @ :35
- 50 fast kick @ 1:00
- 150 cruise swim with snorkel @ 3:30 (easy recovery and great rotation)
- 6 x 25 fast butterfly @ :35
- 50 fast kick @ 1:00

## BRAD SHIVELY

- Kalamazoo College, B.A., history '89
- Two-time All-Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association (MIAA) swimmer and senior team captain at Kalamazoo
- Assistant men's and women's swimming coach, Kalamazoo (1991-97) and Washington University (1997-2000)
- Head coach, Washington University (2000-present)
- Has coached 78 Washington University swimmers to 489 All-America finishes (14 and 47 in 2015 alone)

*In 2015, Washington's men and women finished sixth and eighth, respectively, at Division III NAAs, the fourth season that both squads have placed in the top 10. The team also had 18 individuals earn 2015 CSCAA Scholar All-America honors.*

- 150 cruise swim with snorkel @ 3:30 (easy recovery and great rotation)
- 8 x 25 fast butterfly @ :35
- 50 fast kick @ 1:00
- 150 cruise swim with snorkel @ 3:30 (easy recovery and great rotation)
- 10 x 25 fast butterfly @ :35
- 50 fast kick @ 1:00
- 150 cruise swim with snorkel @ 3:30 (easy recovery and great rotation)

**Coach Shively:** "On the 25s fly, Dalton would try to hold sub-11 seconds and try to kick all of them to about 10 meters."

**2nd-Semester Kick Set****1st Round**

- 2 x 100 fast kick with board and snorkels @ 1:40
- 1 x 50 easy backstroke @ :50 (minimum 5 underwater dolphins off each wall)
- 4 x 100 fast kick with board and snorkels @ 1:40
- 1 x 50 easy backstroke @ :50 (minimum 5 underwater dolphins off each wall)
- 6 x 100 fast kick with board and snorkels @ 1:40
- 1 x 50 easy backstroke @ :50 (minimum 5 underwater dolphins off each wall)

(:30 extra)

**Coach Shively:** "Dalton would try to hold sub-:33 on the 50s kick."

**2nd Round with fins**

- 2 x 100 fast kick with board and snorkels @ 1:30
- 1 x 50 easy backstroke @ :50 (minimum 6 underwater dolphins off each wall)
- 4 x 100 fast kick with board and snorkels @ 1:30
- 1 x 50 easy backstroke @ :50 (minimum 6 underwater dolphins off each wall)
- 6 x 100 fast kick with board and snorkels @ 1:30
- 1 x 50 easy backstroke @ :50 (minimum 6 underwater dolphins off each wall)

**Coach Shively:** "Dalton would try to be sub-1:10 on the board kick 100s and near the 1:00 mark with fins and board." ❖

**SW: You have large nationally-based male and female rosters. Why keep so many athletes?**

**BS:** When student-athletes really want to be collegiate swimmers, it's hard not to be excited about them being a part of the program. It is very fulfilling to work with swimmers who walk on deck every day to push themselves so they can represent WashU to the best of their abilities.

**SW: Ever reach out to international swimmers?**

**BS:** Interest usually begins with the belief that WashU is potentially their academic destination. If an international student were looking for a great academic environment, Washington University could be a terrific fit.

**SW: How do you structure mid-season swim training for mid- and distance swimmers?**

**BS:** We try to maintain a balanced training program with all of our groups. We have middle distance athletes who train on certain days with the distance group and with the sprint group on other days. Specific training depends on individual athlete needs. We try not to categorize a particular swimmer since we may not be sure as to what his or her best events might be. We have had swimmers win NCAA titles in events they didn't start swimming until college. We believe that all swimmers need a strength program, aerobic conditioning, power and speed work and the ability to swim all strokes.

**SW: For sprinters?**

**BS:** There are some important details specific

to sprinting. Clearly, you need strength and explosiveness, but there are other things that make or break a sprint race. Gaining confidence in those areas is important if you are going to develop and use elite sprint speed.

**SW: What role does holiday training play?**

**BS:** It is essential. To accommodate schedules during the academic year, we run upwards of five practices a day. To have a period where we practice as a team every day is critical to building a strong team atmosphere. It is not simply changing locales—it is changing the entire dynamic. To me, the holiday period is less about training and more about training as a team. This sacred team activity of living, training, cooking and hitting the beach together really helps us flourish in the pool.

**SW: Are you doing anything unusual for dryland—such as wheels up stadium inclines or running up the Arch?**

**BS:** Now running up the (Gateway) Arch would be a great workout! We have an excellent sports performance coach, Terry O'Neill, who coordinates a number of our dryland activities. He preaches functional training and defines success by what it does for an athlete, not what it looks like. He focuses on details that allow our athletes to master progressions and properly load their exercises. We supplement the strength program with boxing, battle ropes, kettle bells, stadium stairs and gymnastics rings.

**SW: What's it take for the Bears to be a top-five program?**

**BS:** There are so many strong programs that being among the elite teams is always going to be a challenge. You need a number of very strong swimmers and divers performing, and you have to swim fast at the right time. Having talented athletes who have prioritized representing WashU Swimming and Diving at the highest level of NCAA swimming is a prerequisite.

**SW: Your team has been active in the Hour of Power and Go Gold projects. What's the benefit?**

**BS:** I am lucky that I get to coach a group of highly motivated, socially conscious individuals who really want to make an impact on the world around them. They each have causes about which they are passionate and to which they are willing to devote time and energy.

We have athletes involved with a number of campus programs such as The Date and Green Dot (sexual violence programs provided by the university). One of our alums started and ran a food kitchen on campus

– continued on 44

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For more information/application, check our employment section at [www.LonghornswimCamp.com](http://www.LonghornswimCamp.com). Completed applications accepted until positions filled.

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that made and served meals to needy families in St. Louis. Others have been involved with medical organizations that take trips to Third World countries to help provide basic services in clinics or help in local hospitals.

Involvement in outside endeavors such as these are important not only for developing the swimmer and providing valuable learning experiences, but also for impacting the community.

**SW: Is D-III college swimming an endangered species?**

**BS:** It is hard to say what swimming will look like in the future, but it is important that we be willing to fight for our sport. Knowing that our NCAA Championships' funding is tied to basketball television money means there is a degree of uncertainty. Overall, I think D-III athletics—and certainly swimming and diving—is very healthy, as is shown in the growing numbers of D-III member institutions.

**SW: What can D-III coaches do to protect their sport?**

**BS:** Anything we can do to promote our sport and Division III swimming and diving specifically is a must. Making sure the public is aware of the accomplishments of our student-athletes—both in the classroom and in the pool—is a great way to bring attention to the sport's impact and importance. We also need to realize that the more people who come to the pool, the more likely they are to recognize the terrific things our athletes are doing.

**SW: You have also been a head counselor with several nationally prominent swimming camps, including Stanford (1998) and the University of Michigan (1999-2012). What has been the value of working at those camps?**

**BS:** For one, I learned how to be a better teacher and accept individual nuances. The best part of camp for me is learning to appreciate the range of abilities and the reasons athletes have for being at the camp.

We have had kids who saved up for a year or who only asked for a week of camp as their holiday gift. It meant a great deal to me that they wanted to spend part of their summer working to be the best swimmers they could be.

Working with coaches such as Jon Urbanchek, Jim Richardson, Bob Bowman, Mike Bottom, Skip Kenney and Richard Quick was inspiring, but many other quality coaches were an influential part of my camp experiences. ❖

*Michael J. Stott is an ASCA Level 5 coach whose Collegiate School (Richmond, Va.) teams have won nine state high school championships.*

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# UP & COMERS

## AGE GROUP SWIMMER OF THE MONTH

BY TAYLOR BRIEN

# Tristen Ulett

Not only did Dynamo Swim Club's Tristen Ulett set a national age group record in the girls 13-14 100 yard fly, but she also became the first girl 14-and-under to break 53 seconds. The 13-year-old clocked 52.97 to better the previous NAG mark of 53.19, set by the AquaZot's (Irvine, Calif.) Eva Merrell in 2014.

Tristen's performance came at the Georgia 14 & Under Short Course Championships in February, where she was a part of six state records for girls 13-14: 100 fly, 200 IM (2:01.35), 400 IM (4:19.86) plus three relays. That gives her 15 state records overall in three age groups—nine short course and six long course.

Last December, she won the "B" finals for the 100 yard free (49.75) and 100 fly (53.57) at the Winter Junior Championships-East in Atlanta while also anchoring Dynamo's fourth-place 400 free relay in 49.42.

Coach Beth Winkowski has asked her star age grouper "to commit to developing her underwater presence during practices and races"—a challenge, she notes, that Ulett "has embraced completely."

When Tristen's not swimming, she enjoys Crossfit, rock climbing and playing with her chihuahua, Rico. Ulett's parents, Dane and Tina, noted that she is incredibly humble, yet highly competitive in every area of her life. They also commented that Tristen shares a special bond with her sister, Ryenne, who appears to be following in the footsteps of her older sister. This past summer, Rye set five individual state records of her own for girls 10-and-under! ❖

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PICTURED > Tristen Ulett and her chihuahua, Rico

### WHAT IS THE BEST THING YOU DO IN SWIMMING?

Racing is the thing I do best...I really enjoy competing.

### WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE THING ABOUT SWIMMING?

Championship meets are exciting. I enjoy when my coach is happy with my swim. I love talking to her before and after my races. Looking up on the scoreboard after a big swim and seeing a time that I never expected—there are no words to express that feeling. I love cheering for my teammates. I love the team spirit at my swim club, Dynamo. My biggest competitors are my closest friends—they inspire me to work harder, and we have fun in and out of the pool. I look forward to practices every day. We have fun, but work hard. My coach gives great inspirational talks that are motivating.

### WHAT ARE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO THIS YEAR?

I am hoping to get Olympic Trials cuts this year and compete in Omaha—that would be a dream come true. I have had this dream since the 2008 Olympics.

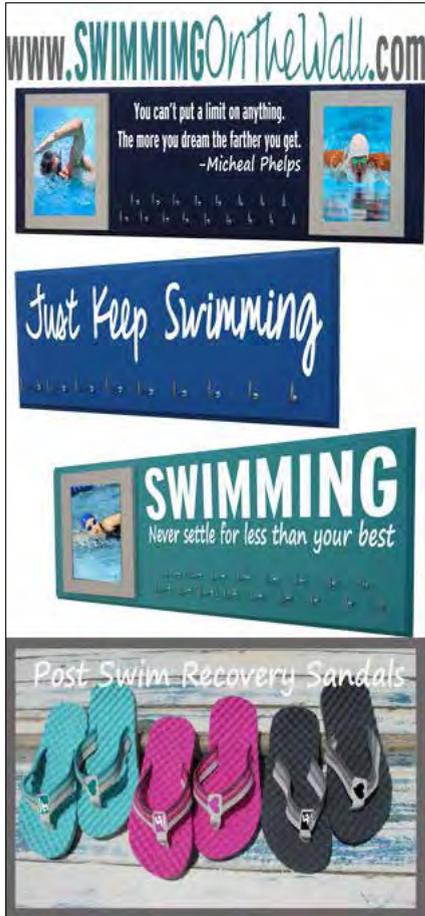
### WHO IS YOUR SWIMMING IDOL...AND WHY?

I don't have idols in swimming, but I do admire all Olympic swimmers, especially Missy Franklin because she was able to go to the Olympics at such an early age. I know that swimming to the top takes a lot of hard work and dedication, and I admire that about all great swimmers.



TOTAL ACCESS MEMBERS CLICK HERE

to learn more about Tristen Ulett, including some of her toughest workouts.



# MASTERS ON THE HORIZON?

BY ANNIE GREVERS

## HOW LIKELY ARE YOU TO DIVE INTO MASTERS SWIMMING AFTER CONCLUDING YOUR COLLEGIATE CAREER? WHY OR WHY NOT?



**CATHLEEN PRUDEN** / Mount Holyoke swimmer, Class of 2016

“My future in Masters swimming is inevitable. When I deny it, my coaches and teammates simply laugh. After 16 years of competition, I still get so much enjoyment out of the sport. I’m a swimmer for life—and Masters is just the next lap of this journey.”



**SEREN JONES** / Long Island University-Post swimmer, Class of 2016

“Despite college swimming being the best years of my life, I plan on withdrawing from the sport completely once my collegiate career ends. I am an extremely competitive person by nature, and I won’t be able to swim and compete, knowing how much better I used to be in college.

“Once I hang up my suit and goggles, I will do so for good, and I will seek a new challenge by taking up a sport in which I have no or little experience.”



**PATRICK MURPHY** / Notre Dame swimmer, Class of 2015

“I finished my collegiate career last winter, and I’ve already dabbled with some Masters practices. I think it is very likely that I’ll compete in Masters swimming at some point in the next couple of years. The drive to better myself and always challenge myself is something that I miss so much from swimming.

“Once I find a great group of Masters swimmers, I can almost guarantee I will participate in the sport. I love swimming too much to stop at age 22.”



**DIANA PIMER /**  
Keene State  
swimmer, Class  
of 2015

"I dove into Masters swimming very soon after my collegiate career ended. I was one of the swimmers on the cusp of making NCAAs, but missed it by about 3-tenths of a second. So I had one of those "non-closure" endings. It took me about a week to get back in the pool, simply because I wasn't satisfied. Swimming also brings my family together, and I couldn't imagine not doing it!"

"I competed in my first meet last month, and it was an amazing experience. Masters swimming is a lifelong journey filled with new opportunities every day!"



**ALEX LABONGE /**  
UNC-  
Wilmington  
swimmer,  
Class of 2015

"I have been in the pool only twice since I graduated from school (a year ago), and I do not see that changing anytime soon."

"With the championship meet season upon us, my love and passion for racing is tested and renewed with each fast result that I see. I very much miss the excitement of meets and the feeling of competing, but then I stop and remember how much work it took to get to my highest point and how much training is required to stay at an elite level in the world of swimming."

"I cannot commit the time and effort that would be required to get me back to the level I was at, and I feel as though I don't want to practice or compete at any level other than my absolute best."

"At this time, I have very little desire to dive into Masters swimming. I smile when I look back and remember what I achieved in the pool. I am content with it all and satisfied to begin the next chapter of my life in the professional world." ❖

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# Parting Shot

Feisty 50 freestylers in the pool, sisters-in-sprint Madison Kennedy and Jessica Hardy strut their own "free styles" on deck at January's Austin Pro Series.

[PHOTO BY ANNIE GREVERS]