



17TH FINA WORLD MASTERS SWIMMING MEET
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY
AUGUST 7-20, 2017
"NOTES FROM THE BANKS OF THE BLUE DANUBE"
by R. S. Bovard

*"You don't have to be a fantastic hero to do certain things - to compete.
You can be just an ordinary chap, sufficiently motivated to reach challenging goals."*

Sir Edmund Hillary

THE CAST: Minnesota Masters swimming was represented at the 17th FINA World Masters Swimming Championships in Budapest, Hungary by eight athletes: Brian Jacobson, Amy Flessert, Jon Foss, Darrell Smith, Mark Sells, Ralph Bovard, and Didier Lamour and his daughter Florent Lamour (DJ's son Benoit also swam but for his native French team). More than 8,000 swimmers from around the world participated in the event. The US contingent was led by head coach Richard Garza (Texas) and three assistant USMS coaches. A total of 310 swimmers represented USMS in this competition.

RESULTS [times & finishes are listed at the end of the article]: Brian Jacobson (age 40-44) had sterling swims in virtually all his events. He is the world champion in the 50 Free (23.92) and had 3rd place finishes in the 100 free (54.57) and 50 butterfly (26.10) as well. He was 8th in the 50 breaststroke and 13th in the 100 breast. "Bubba" Smith (60-64) also had some terrific swims with 5th place finishes in the 100 & 200 butterfly, 7th in the 200 IM and 9th in the 400 IM. The Minnesota men's (age 240-259) relay team of DJ Lamour, Bovard, Smith, and Sells finished 11th in the 200 medley relay and 12th in the 200 free relay.

EN ROUTE: Our group arrived in Paris several days ahead of the meet for some cultural enlightenment. Our native Frenchman, Didier "DJ" Lamour and his wife Sue helped coordinate a dinner cruise on the Seine for a group of ten. Chris Anderson, unable to attend the meet, but in Paris nonetheless, added his characteristic *savoir faire* to our motley crew. Traipsing from the Louve to the Pompadou Gallery to the Arc de Triomphe to the Eifel tower, etc, to what Chris described as "the best chocolaterie in the universe", clearly fatigued our legs and added pounds...but we didn't care. It was an intoxicating experience.

THE BLUE DANUBE: The Masters swim venue was held from August 7-20th and followed the 2017 FINA World Swimming Championships held at the same venues in July. In addition to swimming, athletes also participated in water polo, synchronized swimming, diving, high diving, and open water swimming. The legendary Alfred Hajos swim complex, with two outdoor 50 meter, 10-lane pools and a large warm up pool, was created to honor the great Hungarian swimmer by the same name who won multiple gold medals in the 1896 Olympics. Hajos was an architect and designed the complex that is named after him. The complex is situated on the lovely Margaret Island in the middle of the Danube River and is connected to the former cities of Buda and Pest by bridges and ferry

service. The recently constructed Duna Arena (Duna=Danube in Hungarian) Swim Complex, also consisting of 2 indoor 50 meter, 10-lane pools with a large diving well warm-up pool, was created specifically for this event in two years between 2015-17.

A NATION OF SWIMMERS: Hungary has a history of producing great swimmers. Witness the recent success of the Olympian Katinka Hosszu! But their water polo teams have won more Olympic and World titles than any other country. Still, this meet was about lifelong sport and masters athletes from age 25 to nearly 100. The oldest swimmer in the meet was Bela Horvath Banki at 97 years. "Uncle Banki" was the only competitor in his age group. He said: "I can still swim because I'm healthy. But I'm only healthy because I swim." Bella had spent almost 3 years & 8 months in a POW camp during the Second World War in the Caucasus Mountains. He remains very grateful for the blessings of his life and is eminently proud to be Hungarian. Historical trivia: Johnny Weissmuller was born in 1904 in the Austro-Hungarian empire and later moved to the US with his family. He was the first swimmer to break 1 minute for the 100 meter freestyle.

AN ELEGANT CITY: Budapest is a lovely city of ~ 2 million persons situated on the banks of the winding Danube River. The cities of Buda and Pest were consolidated in 1873 to form this elegant, cosmopolitan urban area known as the "Paris of Eastern Europe". Their currency is the forint or the HUF (HUNGARIAN FORINT). There is delectable dining including goulash stew, sophisticated palaces, world famous thermal baths, horse shows in the bucolic county side, river cruises past the glittering Parliament building, walks along cobbled streets, and terraces along the river front. Once in Budapest, we were scattered about the city at the Ritz, the Intercontinental, and the historic Gellert Hotel.

HOST SITES: In past years the FINA World Masters Swimming Championships have been held in lively, exotic cities. Host venues have included: Tokyo, Japan (1986), Brisbane, Australia (1988), Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (1990), Indianapolis, USA (1992), Montreal, Canada (1994), Sheffield, Great Britain (1996), Casablanca, Morocco (1998), Munich, Germany (2000), Christchurch, NZ (2002), Riccione, Italy (2004), San Francisco, CA (2006), Perth, Australia (2008), Gothenburg, Sweden (2010), Riccione, Italy (2012), Montreal, Canada (2014), and Kazan, Russia (2015). Soule, South Korea is scheduled to host the event in 2019 with Japan hosting in 2021. Consider attending one of the upcoming FINA World Masters Swimming Championship events!

RESULTS:

Brian Jacobsen (age 40-44):

- 50 freestyle, 23.92, first place
- 100 freestyle, 54.57, third Place
- 50 butterfly, 26.10, third Place
- 50 breaststroke, 31.15, 8th place
- 100 breaststroke, 1:10.73, 13th Pl.

Jon Foss (age 50-54):

- 50 butterfly, 28.73, 26th place
- 50 freestyle, 28.01, 48th Pl.
- 200 freestyle, 2:20.04, 33rd Pl.

Darrell Smith (age 60-64):

- 100 butterfly, 1:12.43, fifth Place
- 200 butterfly, 2:58.38, fifth Place
- 200 individual medley, 2:51.62, seventh Place
- 400 individual medley, 6:13.17, ninth Place

Didier Lamour (age 60-64):

- 50 butterfly, 34.13, 32nd Pl.
- 100 breaststroke, 1:35.24, 37th Pl.
- 200 individual medley, 3:13.63, 25th Pl.
- 400 individual medley, 7: 06.50, 25th Pl.

Mark Sells (age 60-64):

- 100 freestyle, 1:16.58, 55th Pl.
- 200 freestyle, 2:58. 28, 40th Pl.

Ralph Bovard (age 65-69):

- 50 freestyle, 31.41, 21st Pl.
- 200 breaststroke, 3:34.88, 15th Pl.
- 200 individual medley, 3:13.46, 20th Pl.
- 400 individual medley, 7:10.94, ninth Place

Amy Flessert

- 200 Free-2:36.96, 42nd
- 400 Free-5:29.74, 22nd
- 800 Free- 11:31.01, 27th
- 100 Breast-1:33.09, 37th
- 200 Breast-3:18.90, 29th

Florent Lamour: (25-29)

- 100 Breast-1:26.05, 30th
- 50 Free: 0:31.53, 68th
- 200 IM- NT

Benoit Lamour: (30-34) swimming for Natation 95

- 50 Free- 0:28.49, 116th
- 200 IM-5:48.81, 34th
- 400 IM- 2:36.44, 48th



RELAYS: Competing in the 240-259 year age bracket the team of D.J. Lamour, Ralph Bovard, Darrell Smith, and Mark Sells finished 11th in the 200 medley relay with the time of-2:24.76; and 12th Pl. in the 200 free relay with the time of- 2:06.41.

“Why I Swim”

*“I start as a body. “Be a good animal,” wrote Emerson.
I am. We are. To be pared down to bone, muscle and twang of leather
is a vitality that is animal in its self appreciation.
I don’t do it to look good; I do it to feel good.
This ruthless agitation of the body is as necessary
as food and rest. I am an animal.”*

Ron Johnson

[the late legendary masters swimmer from Arizona]

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