

MINNESOTA MASTERS SWIMMING NEWSLETTER
REPORT FROM USMS NATIONAL MEET

“Notes of a
MISSION VIEJO, CALIFORNIA
AUGUST 7-11, 2013
Ralph S. Bovard

JACOBSON SETS WORLD RECORD: On day three of the 2013 USMS Long Course Nationals Swim Meet in the fabled Mission Viejo, CA pool, Brian Jacobson shattered the 40-44 year old age group world record in the 50-meter freestyle with a 23.60 sprint. It turned out that his time was the fastest time of ALL competitors in ALL age groups that day which is pretty amazing. He beat the second place finisher in his age group by 1.42 seconds... in the shortest race of the meet!! Brian also won the 50-meter butterfly in 26.81 seconds and the 100-meter freestyle in 53.30 seconds. His 100 freestyle time was the third fastest of all swimmers in the meet. He was second in the 50 and 100-meter breaststroke events in :30.18 and 1:07.58 respectively. Jay Anderson (55-59 age group) had good swims in the 50 and 100-meter breaststroke races to finish 9th and 8th respectively. Terrell Brown (60-64 age group) had solid swims in the 50, 100, 200, and 400-meter freestyle events. Kudos to all!

CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR: Meanwhile, I managed to raise my profile as a criminal element in the old guy (60-64 age group) masters division by getting disqualified in two of my five events. That is a 40% DQ rate. My father, a retired district court judge would have considered this well nigh felonious behavior! In medicine, if something occurs with greater than 5% frequency it is considered “statistically significant”. There are lessons to be learned here, and I will get to them in a minute. Admittedly, the 60-65 age group is a cut-throat division. There is good reason for the judges to be keenly vigilant and apply the laws of natation without mercy. I accepted my penance without whinging. Furthermore, I do here and now confess that, in addition to an occasional beer, my Performance Enhancing Drug (PED) of choice is a good martini [Boodles gin, a touch of vermouth, & 3 olives, thank you!] at the end of the day. Fortunately they weren’t breath, blood, or urine testing.

A RECIDIVIST HISTORY: I have been disqualified before in swim meets. In high school, I left the blocks too soon while anchoring a relay and lost the meet for my team. Got the goat award for that! A few years ago, at the Canadian nationals meet in Montreal, I flutter kicked on my butterfly, which has already been described by D.J. Lamour as “miserable” anyway. In Arizona, I failed to sign in for a 200-yard breaststroke event and was DQ’d without even having to get wet.

SIN NO MORE: This year at Mission Viejo, my two disqualifications were easily avoidable had I been thinking. A wise person learns from others mistakes!

DISQUALIFICATION #1: In the 100 breast stroke, I made the mistake of grabbing my “race only goggles” that I had used at short course nationals in May 2013, but not since then. I didn’t warm up in them since they cinch tightly but had never leaked before. Once I hit the water, however, both sides filled with water. I was swimming blind most of the first length, and I had to get them off. My oxygen starved brain reasoned that if I waited until reaching the end of the pool I would then have to hang on to the gutter with one hand and remove the goggles with the other, which would cost me precious time. The alternative was to snag the goggles with my fingers during the recovery portion of my stroke as the arms were going forward, scoop them off and fling them away before the turn in one fluid motion, then execute my turn, without having to stop. All good in theory. Unfortunately, I syncopated my arm movements enough, as I tried to throw the goggles over the gutter, that the judge called me for an asymmetric stroke. Bingo. DQ!

LESSON #1: Don’t use untested equipment in an important race. Always warm up with the same gear you are going to use in the event. Tom Emison told me that he will get 2 new pairs of goggles before a big meet and alternate using them in the two weeks leading up to the competition, so that he knows they work perfectly. And he carries both pairs to the starting blocks in case a strap breaks on one. Great minds prepare, over and over, so that the execution can be flawless! [Addendum: I never used goggles in high school (Iowa) or college (St. Olaf) ; they weren’t invented or available to us Midwestern bumpkins in the early-mid 70’s to my knowledge. Accursed pieces of plastic!]

DISQUALIFICATION #2: Through-out the meet, the sprint lane volunteers & coaches had been helping teach swimmers to find their track start position (anywhere from #1 to #8 on the new adjustable starting blocks). I was openly critical to the point of almost registering a complaint with the head referee that it was delaying our ability to just do sprint warm-ups. I remember distinctly saying to another swimmer, as we waited in line (and I quote): *“Most of these folks don’t use the back leg anyway and its just stupid to change your routine at the national meet anyway!”* (end quote) The lines were slower than molasses as swimmers with stumbling starts now did them one foot further back from the front of the block. Most people in masters don’t benefit from the track start, because they don’t have the leg strength to gain a significant advantage. If you are Usain Bolt, yes, then by all means do a track start. Anyway, it took forever just to get up to the blocks to do a start. Very frustrating. However, on my last day, for the 200 breast stroke, I got sucked into the track start buzz and when the timer asked what position I wanted the blocks, I put it at #4. What could it hurt? The start wasn’t going to make or break the 200 breast. All I had to do was finish the race to get top 10 and maybe top 5. Piece of cake. I lined up just like I was back in 9th grade running the low hurdles on the cinder track. Mind you, this is 45 years later and status post 3 knee surgeries. Super Man look out, I was gonna fly off those blocks. However, the change in position was enough so that my feet were not together, ie, flutter kicked on entry, and/or under water along with my dolphin kick so that the stroke judge deemed my leg technique illegal. DQ #2.

LESSON #2: Don't change technique, starts, or anything about your stroke in a big race! Never! Ever! Finito! (SEE LESSON #1 above).

HELLO FROM TINA! I ran into Tina O'Neil, former coach at Macalaster, well known Minnesota Master's swimmer of many years, and 2 time English Channel finisher, at the meet. She is coaching at Mission Viejo and the Dana Point swim clubs and swimming almost daily in the ocean. She is also volunteering for the Catalina Swim Foundation. She was well tanned, happy to be back in her home state close to family, and seemed generally at peace with the world! She lives in the Laguna Beach area. She sends her greetings to all!

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION: My wife and I stayed two nights at Dana Point near San Clemente and two nights in Laguna Beach at the Inn at Laguna. This was George Bowlin's old stompin' grounds where he lived and trained in the Laguna-Mission area in his collegiate years. He gave us some tips on dining such as *Las Brisas*, a lovely restaurant overlooking the sea, that were spot on! We discovered what we now consider the best sushi bar EVER! Just across the street from the Inn at Laguna. It is called 242 Café Fusion Sushi www.fusionart.us and is owned and run by an all-female staff. The dining is exquisite. Marnie, who is vegetarian, and I agree it is a place to die for!

FINA WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS- AUGUST 2014-MONTREAL, CANADA: The FINA masters world swim meet will be in Montreal, August 3-10, 2014. It should be a fantastic event. If you haven't been to a world competition, they are fun. I attended the meet in Christchurch, New Zealand in 2002 and the meet in Perth, Australia in 2008. Several MN swimmers attended the meet in Gothenberg, Sweden in 2012 and the meet in Riccione, Italy in 2010. The Stanford meet in 2006 was also well attended. This meet should be world class in every respect. The pool complex is on an island and is connected to the light rail lines to make it convenient to access from hotels.

LINKS:

15th FINA World Masters Championships: <<http://finamasters2014.org>>

Also, you can sign up via i-phone for updates at: <finamasters2014.org/fanclub>

Additional information regarding Montreal at: <www.tourisme-montreal.org>

GOOD TIMES & FAST TIMES: My wife and I attended the 2011 Canadian national swim meet in Montreal. It was very well coordinated and I would anticipate that this meet will be superbly run as well. I have attended Canadian national meets in Halifax, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Montreal. They know how to throw a meet! There seems to be a ground swell of interest among Minnesota swimmers to plan on attending this meet. We could have a robust representation and have some strong relay teams. Tom Emison, and his team of fitness gurus, are already working on an

training program & timeline to guarantee that all who chose to submit to the arduous regimen taper and peak optimally for Montreal!

DANGEREUX MOUILLE = DANGEROUS WHEN WET! One additional source of entertainment at this meet will be to allow us to see Didier Lamour speaking his native tongue. In Montreal we will be the one's with the funny accent, eh, Monsieur? My late Mother and I visited Quebec in the early 1990's. She had studied French in college and took the opportunity to brush up on her repertoire. She kept saying to people "Mon fils es disparue", which I later learned meant "My son is lost". At the time I thought she was preparing in case we might get separated, but in retrospect it may have subconsciously reflected her concern for my path in life pre-Marnie!

EXTEND YOUR VACATION & ENJOY CANADA! Montreal is one of the great cosmopolitan cities of the world. They have international jazz and film festivals, a wide variety of museums, the Montreal Canadiens NHL hockey team, a casino, unbelievable restaurants, scintillating night life, and the Olympic stadium. There is more going on than you could enjoy in several lifetimes. Both times I visited we took the train from Montreal to Quebec City in ~3 hours where you can wander the old city, take a cruise on the St. Lawrence Seaway, and/or stay at the elegant (and expensive) Chateau Frontenac.

Au revoir (Goodbye!) & a la prochaine! (see you soon!)

Ralph Bovard

"I love Montreal!"

Rene Zellweger

"Montreal is a great city, a terrific city."

Robert DeNiro

"Montreal, this wonderful town...Pearl of Canada, Pearl of the World."

Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev