

Jim Pelissier's Hall of Fame Story - 2014

Written October 2014

Jim started taking swim lessons in grade school, but for some reason ended up quitting. He got back in the pool as a 10th grader when he found he wasn't quite good enough to make the basketball team at his high school. The swim team at St. Cloud Tech High School at the time wasn't very good, so everyone who knew how or wanted to learn to swim, made the team. This was fine with Jim because everyone on the team got to swim two events in every meet. The pool at St. Cloud Tech was only 15 yards long and three lanes wide; sometimes swim practice was a contact sport.

Jim found out he was pretty good at swimming. In 1962, when he went to college, he joined the swim team at the University of Minnesota. Bob Mowerson coached him. Jim was primarily a breaststroker.

Jim started competing as a master's swimmer in 1972, as a 28 year old, (and has been swimming and competing ever since). In '72, he joined the Northern Shores Masters team coached by Tom Hodgson. That year he attended the first of many national competitions by participating in the Summer Long Course National meet in Bloomington Indiana. He attended with Minnesota Hall of Famer, Ray Hakomaki. Records show Jim had two national Top Ten times that year in the 100 and 200-meter breaststroke, so he did quit well at the meet. Apparently, they were not offering the 50-meter breast in the early years of Masters Swimming.

Over a span of 40 plus years, Jim as attained 114 USMS Top Ten times for individual events and five times for relays. One of his individual placements was first, awarding him All American status for that year. Jim competing in 6 World Championships over the years and accumulated 19 medals for his efforts, seven of those were top five finishes. He won two National Championships in the 45-49 age group in the 200 breaststroke and 200 IM. In 2004, as a 60 year old, he set the Masters National Record in the 200 breast.

Here is a Funny Story that Jim remembered: At one National meet, Jim entered a coed relay with Wayde Mulhern, Mary Beth and an unnamed women that failed to make it to the starting blocks. What ended up happening is Paul Windrath swam in her place wearing a women's suit. If you know Paul he is a slender man and not that "womanly" but no one seemed to notice. They did not place in the top ten, but finished the race and were not disqualified.

Jim also has contributed over the years to Minnesota Masters by being the official pool measurer – and that darn University of Minnesota Natatorium pool, with its movable bulkhead, has to be measured ever meet. Jim will tell you he enjoys the people at the meets these days more than actually racing. He is also known for his excellent after race pointers and stroke corrections. He works out daily at the White Bear Lake YMCA and is always in great shape.



Jim on the left