

Swimming

for fun & fitness



By Pam Knepper

One swimmer comes to work out for a triathlon and another comes because her doctor recommends it for good health. One swimmer comes because it makes him feel good and another swimmer comes to compete. The one thing they all have in common, though, is that they love to swim. The Masters Swimming program at the Bellevue Club offers all of them the opportunity to do just that.

The United States Masters Swimming (USMS)-affiliated program officially began in 1979 and today includes more than 100 members.

ABOVE Bellevue Club Masters swimmer Steve Sussex demonstrates his smooth freestyle stroke.

RIGHT A handful of the 100-plus swimmers that participate in the Bellevue Club's Masters Swimming program. Back row, l-r: Masters Assistant Coach Karen Dugan, Robert Dallain, Masters Head Coach Cory Hilderbrand, Nancy Price, Alice Godfred, Jennifer Dills, Joel Glass, Tim O'Brien, Lynette Baucke and Kerry Sussex. Front row, l-r: Troy Griffith, Carolyn Behse and Steve Sussex.

What is the Bellerue Club Masters Swimming Program?

“It is an organized program of swimming designed for any adult 18 years of age and over,” explains Cory Hilderbrand, Masters Head Coach. “We have a wide range of swimmers. We have basic beginners all the way up to individuals who compete at the international level.”

Cory swam for 14 years in age-group competition with the Kent Area Dolphins and at Kentridge High School for four years. He has taught swimming since the age of 15, including teaching the Marahna Swim Team, Valley Aquatic Swim Team and Bellevue Club Swim Team. He’s coached all levels of swimming—novice, age group, seniors, high school and Masters. All combined, he has 11 years of coaching under his belt. He is certified as a life-guard instructor, water-safety instructor, holds both a USA

coaches’ card and a United States Masters Swimming coaching card, is a member of the American Swim Coaches Association and is a certified pool operator.

The Masters Swimming program focuses on the primary strokes of competitive swimming—freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke and butterfly. “We help people with their stroke technique and, if needed, how to do the strokes,” says Cory.

Offered Monday through Saturday, practices range from 1,000 meters (40 laps) for beginners, to almost 4,500 meters (180 laps) for the more advanced swimmers. Cory says the best thing about the program is that it accommodates every skill level. “That’s the great thing about Masters Swimming, it is really flexible. But the Masters program is more than that,” says Cory. “You get a lot of uniqueness in how the members are training.”

Some of the swimmers come to the program to train for triathlons or national swimming competitions, or

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simply because they love to swim and are searching for an aerobic workout. Swimmers even come to the Masters program to meet new people who enjoy a similar interest.

"My goal for the people who participate is for them to become better swimmers, get faster, improve their strokes and enjoy the sport of swimming. I want them to swim for life," explains Cory.

So Why Swim?

"Swimming is the best sport to work out your entire body," says Cory. "You work your muscles, your lungs, your heart, everything. It's low impact, so it's a great workout for anybody. If you're able to swim laps and you want to come and get in better shape, swimming is the best way to do it."

The program is open to adults 18 years and older. Currently, there are swimmers who are 19 all the way up to 84.

"I'd like to see adults of all ages represented in our program," says Cory. "If you are at least 18, we have a place for you."

Practices are held Monday through Friday from 5:45 to 7 a.m. and noon to 1 p.m., and on Saturdays from 7 to 8:30 a.m.

According to Cory, the program is great because for many swimmers it's an effective way to work out and is available before many people go to work.

Swimmers can attend as many practices as they want. The cost is \$6 per workout, \$42.50 for six or more work-



Reaching for new heights



Fishing, of all things, was the reason why Troy Griffith learned to swim as a child.

"I wanted to go fishing with my dad and my mom wouldn't let me go until I knew how to swim. My dad taught me how to swim so I could fish and not drown," says Troy. "My dad swam as a student at the University of Washington, so he certainly knew how to teach his son the basics of swimming."

Troy's swimming career didn't stop there. When he was seven years old, he joined the Samera Swim Club in Bellevue and swam in the summer league. Two years later, he started swimming year-round at the Bellevue Club. As a student at Interlake High School, Troy swam for his school and continued to swim at the Club.

"I attended Interlake High School and swam all four years on their team," says Troy. "My greatest swimming accomplishments were in high school when our team won two team state titles my sophomore and junior years, and when I won two individual titles my senior year in the 100 and 200 free."

After high school, Troy went away to college and attended the University of California at Berkeley, where he swam for four years.

"I found swimming in college to be very different from high school. Swimming was for fun and competition in high school," explains Troy. "When I swam in college, it became hard work, but it also drove me to improve and reach for new goals in my life."

After college, Troy moved back to Bellevue and retired

outs a month or \$52.50 per couple for six or more workouts a month.

Some swimmers only come in the morning or at noon and some even come six days a week. The workout changes each day, but the coaches provide the same workout for each practice for that particular day.

“We use all nine lanes of the pool for each workout and break everyone up into appropriate swimming levels,” explains Cory. “We have three lanes dedicated to fast swimmers, three for average swimmers and the remaining three lanes are reserved for beginning swimmers.”

The next scheduled Masters meet is the USMS 2005 Long Course National Championships, which will be held Aug. 11-15 at the Marguerite Aquatic Center in Mission Viejo, California. In addition, every February the Bellevue Club hosts a USMS Masters meet, attracting swimmers from all over the United States and Canada.

To swim in meets, a swimmer must register with their Local Masters Swim Committee (LMSC). In Washington

state, the committee is the Pacific Northwest LMSC (www.swimpna.org). The registration fee is \$35, which includes a “USMS Swimmer” magazine subscription, insurance coverage while participating in USMS events and opportunities to participate in training clinics and swimming (competitive, fitness and open water) events across the United States. However, swimmers do not have to register or compete to participate in the Bellevue Club Masters Swimming program.

Whether you want to compete or just come to the practices, the Bellevue Club Masters program is a great way to help you get in shape and have some fun.

“I want the men and women who swim in our program to have a good experience,” says Cory. “But I also want other people to see what we have to offer and come be a part of it.”

For more information on the Masters Swimming program, contact Cory Hilderbrand at 688-3127 or visit www.bellevueclub.com and click on the “Aquatics” link.

from swimming. After five years passed, he began to swim at the Club on his own. Then three years ago he decided to join the Club’s Masters Swimming program.

“I joined because I wanted to see how fast I could go after several years out of competition,” says Troy. “While I only swim one Masters meet per year, it is great fun competing again. Plus, it is good exercise and a fun way to stay in shape.”

Working out three mornings a week, Troy says the hardest thing about Masters swimming is being consistent with your workouts.

“You need to swim on a regular basis,” says Troy. “If you take a week off it takes two weeks to get back into the condition you were in before.”

While he agrees there is nothing easy about the program, Troy says the coaching staff makes the workouts worthwhile. “The coaches really care about all the Masters swimmers. They are great people who are willing to help out and instruct swimmers at every level.”

Along with the coaches, Troy says it is the other swimmers that make the program enjoyable.

“I really like the people I have met through the Masters program,” he comments. “We all are doing something



we love and, at the same time, providing encouragement for each other.”

Troy has taken this encouragement and also applied it to his own family. He has helped his wife Annette become a strong swimmer and is currently teaching his children Garrett and Kira a few tricks in the water.

When asked what he would say to someone who might be

considering joining the Club’s Masters Swimming program, Troy enthusiastically answers, “Everyone is welcome. It doesn’t matter what level you are at as a swimmer. The coaches want you to be the best swimmer you can be, so they take the time to work with you. It is definitely a lot of hard work, but worth the effort. So come, join us and get ready to have the time of your life.”

RIGHT Troy swimming for the University of California at Berkeley in 1993.

ABOVE Troy and Annette Griffith with their two children, Garrett and Kira.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP Masters swimmers Troy Griffith, Carolyn Behse and Steve Sussex.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM Troy Griffith.





Master of her domain

For Carolyn Behse, her love of the water began at the tender age of 10. Growing up in McMinnville, Oregon, Carolyn joined the city's swim team and started a relationship with swimming that would last a lifetime.

"It may sound silly now, but I joined the team mainly because my friends were there and I wanted to be with them," admits Carolyn. "I soon realized competitive swimming was more than hanging out with my friends. It was something I really enjoyed doing."

Quickly showing her skills as a breaststroker, Carolyn fine-tuned her talent from those early years as a young swimmer all the way through high school as a member of the McMinnville High School Swim Team. Swimming at the state level during her junior and senior years, Carolyn says she felt fortunate to be able to compete at all.

"It was the early 1960s and many high schools didn't offer team sports for girls," explains Carolyn. "Luckily for me, McMinnville High saw things differently."

But when she went to college, the reality of the times caught up with her. Enrolled at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Carolyn was not able to compete at the colle-

gate level because the university did not have a women's swim team.

"I was quite disappointed," Carolyn says. "I really enjoyed competing and was looking forward to swimming in college but, unfortunately, there was nothing I could do about it."

Eleven years would pass before Carolyn would again swim competitively.

"What happened to me is not unusual for competitive swimmers," admits Carolyn. "Many choose to take a break or it is forced because other responsibilities get in the way."

After graduating from Oregon State in 1965 with a degree in education, the following year Carolyn married husband Dean, and the two settled into a life together. During the next several years, the couple moved around a lot.

"Dean's job took us to Denver, Los Angeles, Sun Valley and Seattle," says Carolyn. "During that time we also had our two children, Doug and Mindy. In 1974 the moving ended and we decided to put down roots in Bellevue."

Two years after moving to Bellevue, Carolyn decided it was time to get back into swimming and joined the Bellevue Eastside Masters Swim Team. She also served on the Pacific Northwest Aquatics Board, the organization that oversees Masters Swimming in the state of Washington.

"I swam three to four times a week and it felt so good to be back in the water doing what I enjoy," says Carolyn. "Plus, spending time with other people who loved swimming as much as I did was an added bonus."

Along with workouts, Carolyn started to compete in Masters meets. Her races of choice were usually the 100- and 200-yard breaststroke.

"I have been fortunate to be able to go to many Masters meets and do well," she says. "One of the highlights was swimming a personal best time and winning my age group in the 200-yard breaststroke on the day I turned 40. It was my best time ever. I couldn't have asked for a better birthday present."

Carolyn's greatest swimming accomplishment was when she won the Gold medal in the women's 200-meter individual medley relay at the Masters Worlds meet in Toronto, Canada in 1978.

"It is hard to describe what it feels like to win a gold medal," says Carolyn. "It was electrifying!"

In 1979, Carolyn decided to join the Bellevue Club Masters Swimming program.

"When I visited the Club and saw their wonderful pool, I knew this was the place I wanted to work out," says Carolyn. "Plus, the Masters coaches at the Club are just great. They really care about each swimmer and take the time to give you helpful hints about your strokes."

Confident to venture beyond the walls of a swimming pool, over the years Carolyn has competed several times



in the Waikiki Roughwater event, a 2.4-mile ocean swim, winning the top prize for her age group in 1994.

“Roughwater swimming is a totally unique experience compared to swimming in a pool,” explains Carolyn. “You have to be very aware of the currents and tides and take necessary precautions so you don’t get into trouble.”

As a member of the United States Masters Swimming (USMS) organization, Carolyn attends clinics specifically geared for Masters swimmers.

“Four years ago I went to Stanford University and attended a two-day U.S. Sports Camp clinic. Skip Kenney, Stanford’s men’s head swim coach and Ted Knapp, associate head men’s swim coach, were our teachers,” says Carolyn. “The nice thing about being part of USMS is they offer clinic opportunities. It is just an added perk of being part of this fabulous organization.”

The clinic covered stroke mechanics, drills, starts and turns, critique of strokes, training physiology, mental attitude, training principles, strength training and injury prevention.

And when swim meets, roughwater swims and clinics are not taking up this busy lady’s time, Carolyn has been known to compete in the Danskin Triathlon.

“In 1997, I decided to try my hand at this triathlon and ended up winning my age group,” says Carolyn. “It was incredible. I certainly wasn’t expecting to win, but my Masters swimming certainly helped with my training and overall success.”

When asked why she loves swimming so much, Carolyn smiles and quickly rattles off a list of pluses for the sport.

“Swimming keeps you in great physical shape, so you are able to do so many other things like go shopping for

really cute suits. It also gives me the opportunity to swim with my girlfriends and I can eat a lot more food than most of my friends and family,” laughs Carolyn. “But in all seriousness, swimming has always given me a sense of well-being and I enjoy the opportunity to compete.”



As far as the future, Carolyn is already busy training for the World Masters Championships, which will be held next August at Stanford University.

“I am really pushing myself to make the time standards for this meet,” says Carolyn. “This is the world’s largest competitive aquatic meet with more than 8,000 swimmers spanning 60 countries expected to be there. I am going to do everything I can to ensure that I am one of them.”

ABOVE LEFT Carolyn receiving her award for placing second at the 2004 Waikiki Roughwater Swim.

ABOVE Pictured, l-r: Julie Corman, Juanita Correa, Sue Dills and Carolyn after winning the gold medal in the women’s 200-meter individual medley relay at the 1978 Masters World meet in Toronto, Canada.

OPPOSITE PAGE Carolyn Beyse is all smiles in the water.

Master of the Medals



Masters swimmer Marion Chadwick, 83, won three Silver medals in her age group (Women’s 80-84) at the United States Masters Swimming National Short Course Championships held in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, May 19-22. She won Silver medals in the 200, 500 and 1,500 freestyle.

Marion was also one of 10,000 athletes invited to attend and compete in the 2005 Summer National Senior Olympics held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, June 3-15.

She won a Silver medal in the 500 freestyle, placed fourth in the 200 and 100 Freestyle and came in fifth in the 200 Backstroke.

One of the largest recurring multisport events in the country, the Summer National Senior Olympics provides competition for athletes ages 50 and older. Marion represented the State of Washington after qualifying in the State Senior Games last summer. We are proud of you, Marion. Congratulations!



Swimming for your breakfast

Raised in southern California, Steve Sussex learned how to swim almost as soon as he learned to walk.

"A lot of neighbors had swimming pools in their backyards, so if I wanted to play with them, I had to learn to swim," says Steve. "For me the choice was clear. I had to learn to swim."

Taking lessons at the local YMCA pool, Steve's introduction into competitive, age-group swimming began when he turned 10 and joined the Culver City Roadrunners Swim Team in Los Angeles. He swam year-round with the Roadrunners and when he reached high school, joined his school's team.

After graduating from Westchester High School in 1973, Steve moved to Seattle to attend the University of Washington and swam on their team.

"I was a good college swimmer, but certainly not someone who stood out in the pack," Steve confesses. "I like to describe my role as someone who was filling in the gaps."

After graduating in 1977, Steve stopped swimming and for the next 15 years gained around two pounds a year.

"I find it interesting that many people who swam competitively when they were young stop swimming for several years before they return to it as an adult," explains Steve. "Some say people stop because they get burned out or because swimming isn't fun for them anymore. I didn't feel either way. I had gained weight and my energy level was low because of a lack of exercise. I knew if I started swimming again, those issues would go away."

Fired up to change his lifestyle, in 1992 Steve joined a group of Masters swimmers who worked out five days a week at the Mary Wayte Pool on Mercer Island. Equipped with no formal coaching staff, the group coached themselves.

"Many of us were former competitive swimmers, so we took the knowledge we had and used that to write workouts and coach each other," says Steve. "Surprisingly, it worked out quite well."

Two years after joining the Mercer Island Masters group, Steve began competing in national meets.

"I discovered Masters meets were just like age-group meets. Swimmers are broken down by their age and their sex and placed into a group," says Steve. "When you are a kid, being at the bottom of your age group is typically not a good thing, but when you are 40 years old and the youngest one in your age group, it is a real plus."

For Steve, his greatest Masters swimming accomplishment to date occurred in 1998 at the World Masters meet in Portland, Oregon, when he won the 400-meter free.

"I have always loved freestyle, but I am not a sprinter or a long-distance swimmer. I typically like 200- and 400-meter freestyle events," says Steve. "When the time came to swim, I thought I might have a chance at winning the 400, but when I actually won, I couldn't believe it. It was one of the happiest days of my life."

In 2002 when the Bellevue Club renovated their swimming pool, Steve and his family decided to become members. Almost immediately Steve, along with his wife Kerry, began working out with the Club's Masters Swimming program.

"The Club by far has the nicest pool in the Northwest. It has been a real pleasure using such a beautiful facility," says Steve. "My wife and I were looking for an activity we could do together. Joining the Club's program has been a great way to work out and spend time together."

An added bonus for Steve has been the Club's Masters coaching staff composed of Head Coach Cory Hilderbrand and Assistant Coach Karen Dugan.





“Cory and Karen are truly interested in making every swimmer better,” Steve explains. “They both are excellent when it comes to giving me the information I need to improve my stroke and technique. They don’t just give you a workout, they are also your teachers.”

Steve says one of the things he has learned since joining Masters swimming is accepting the fact that he isn’t going to be as fast as he was in college.

“At first it was a hard lesson for me to accept, but after I did, I found myself enjoying swimming even more,” explains Steve. “I also realized if I take a few weeks off from working out, it takes me a lot longer to get back in shape again. So I am learning to be more consistent with my workouts.”

One of the reasons Steve’s workouts have become more consistent is because he is training for the World Masters Championships, which will be held next August at Stanford University.

“I want to swim the 200- and 400-meter free at the Worlds,” says Steve. “So that is what I am mostly focusing my attention on now.”

When asked what makes the Masters swimming program so great, Steve enthusiastically declares it’s the people that make it so special.

“It is nice to hang out with a group of people who love swimming as much as I do. We all want to do well and get ourselves in good physical condition so we can enjoy life for many more years to come,” explains Steve. “But I guess the single greatest thing about Masters swimming at the Bellevue Club is going out to breakfast with Karen Dugan after Saturday morning practice. That truly makes all the effort worth it.”

ABOVE Steve and Kerry Sussex at the 2001 Masters National meet in Santa Clara, California.

RIGHT Steve exploding off the block at the 1998 Worlds Masters meet.

OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP
Steve Sussex.

OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM
Steve emerging victoriously from the water after winning the 400-meter freestyle at the 1998 World Masters meet in Portland, Oregon.

