



# Newsletter



## USMS Renewal

Be sure to renew your \$75 USMS membership starting November 1<sup>st</sup>! Registration is **required** for all meets in 2025 and to cover your team's insurance for practices! Join or renew today!

<https://www.usms.org/join-usms/join-or-renew>.

Use the following settings to register:

LMSC: North Carolina

Club: NCMS

Workout Group: Your workout group Here

## NCMS Online

Web: [ncmasters.org](http://ncmasters.org)

Instagram: [ncmastersswimming](https://www.instagram.com/ncmastersswimming)

Facebook: [North Carolina Masters Swimming](https://www.facebook.com/NorthCarolinaMastersSwimming)

## What a summer!

Hi everyone and welcome to the fall newsletter. I had hoped to get my first ever newsletter out around the Olympics but I was too busy swimming. Many of you know me as the meet director for our state meets in Cary every year in the spring and our long course meet in the summer. We have already booked the Triangle Aquatic Center for March 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> the meet will also be the South East Zone meet. I hope to see you all there.



There is still time to sign up for the Funvitational at the UNCW pool on November 2<sup>nd</sup>. This is a fun meet and there is a great social with BBQ after. Come and have some fun with the Hawk Masters of Wilmington.



Since our last newsletter several of us traveled to Indianapolis to compete in the USMS Spring Nationals held at IU Natatorium while USA Swimming held the Olympic trials just down the road in Lucas Oil Stadium. I know I for one had a great time swimming fast and watching the Olympians swim faster! NCMS finished in 4<sup>th</sup> place this year!

NCMS also had a large turnout at the Blue Tides Dog Days of Summer LCM meet in Augusta, GA. I know several swimmers had great swims before the thunderstorms started rolling in.

Remember starting November 1<sup>st</sup> you can register for USMS 2025. Registration is **required** for all meets in 2025 such as Jerry Clark Sun Belt Championship, South East Zone Championships in Cary, RAM's last chance LCM meet and the 2025 Funvitational.

Swim fast and enjoy masters swimming!

~Mark Rubacky, Newsletter Editor



## And Now a Word From Our Chairman!

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It's been quite the summer and start to the fall. From the triumphs at the Olympics to the CEO departure at USA Swimming and the havoc of multiple hurricanes there has been a great deal that has happened in a short time. Our hearts go out to our swimmers in Western NC, we at NCMS are actively working to try and find some solutions to support those of you that have been impacted by Helene. Look for an email regarding this soon. "Impacted" though seems too small a word, and swimming itself seems small when compared with the loss of businesses, artist studios, venues, breweries, restaurants, and countless other ventures that people have built their lives on. Swimming though provides a home to many of us, the comfort of your friends and lane mates in the early hours before the sun has even risen, travelling with companions to meets in exciting locales, coffee shared after a particularly grueling workout. I know I find comfort at the pool, it's a place of stability for me. I crave the regimen of daily practice. As a coach it's the routine that keeps me going. I see friends, know what to expect; and yet still face exciting challenges every day when I step on the pool deck. We coaches write practices with the idea that things will run perfectly, knowing full well we will have to modify many things or in some cases toss the whole practice out. It's the "idea" of it, that's what I live for. Like Gatsby's shining green light, it's something to reach for. These past few weeks have taught many of us that we are never truly prepared. That stands for the pool deck as well, those of us on deck and those of us in the water. We can never be sure of what is coming. All we can do is cleave to the people that make all of this matter, support one another and hope for a better tomorrow (and of course speak ill of the practice that cruel coach just put you through).

For those of you still in the water I look forward to seeing you all at the Jerry Clark Meet and at Southeastern Zone Champs. For those of you that have yet to return to the water. Stay the course, you will find your way back and we will support you any way we can.

Cheers NCMS, and a full heart and all we can give to our friends who have suffered deeply in these past weeks.

Yours in swimming,

*Coach Trey Taylor - NCMS Chair*

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## NCMS Board positions

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In March of 2025, there will be NCMS Board positions coming open for nominations. If you are interested in running for one of the offices, please reach out to me via email ([ikeepswimming@gmail.com](mailto:ikeepswimming@gmail.com)) for more information. Job descriptions can be found on the [ncmasters.org](http://ncmasters.org) website in the by-laws.

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## NCMS Swimmer Spotlight – Kim Ruiz



I want to share the incredible story of Kim Ruiz, a swimmer on my team, Imp Masters. She graciously allowed me to interview her about her journey from injury to Olympic Trials qualifier. Kim is no stranger to the world of swimming. As a child, she splashed around in the family pool, participated in summer league, swam for her high school team, and spent two years on a club team. She even earned a swimming scholarship to Gardner-Webb University, but due to transferring to a different school, she decided to end her collegiate swimming career early.

Despite leaving the sport of swimming, she remained active for both her physical and mental health. She had been happily participating in CrossFit for many years, but a hip injury had sidelined her for well over a year. When Kim reached out to my team last spring, it was at the urging of her physical therapist. They recommended that getting back in the pool could help with rehab and provide her an outlet for her energy as she healed. She signed up for her first practice in May 2023.

Her first master's practice was fraught with nervousness and second guesses. She even called her husband before her trial swim in a panic! Kim didn't own any swim gear and had to buy everything right before that first practice. Even though she took it easy for her first few months with the team, skipping kick sets and only swimming freestyle, it didn't take long for her to realize that swimming fast was possible again. Due to an aggressive campaign to get more Imps to attend the Hawk Masters FUN-vitational in October 2023 (it's me, I'm the aggressor!), Kim signed up for her first meet in over a decade. When she threw down a fast 100-yard breaststroke swim and broke the NCMS record for her age group, she wondered what other records and qualifying cuts she could achieve. The next day, after absolutely crushing the open water race, Swim the Loop, both she and our head coach, Laura Goodwin, had the same crazy thought...Olympic Trials cut?

Almost overnight, a plan was put in motion. The trials cut was a stretch goal, but go big or go home, right? Training for this level of competition as a 32-year-old is quite different from what most of us know as former age group swimmers. CrossFit was added back for strength, but what differs is swimming yardage. Quality over quantity, if you will. Working a full-time job limits your ability to train, but Kim found that by swimming just five hours a week with practices between 2,000-3,000 yards, she can still swim as fast (actually faster!) than she used to. It's been a bit of trial and error to find what works best now, but ultimately it comes down to quality sprint sets, listening to her body, and adjusting accordingly.



Kim achieved her Olympic Trials cut on May 18th at the 2024 Charlotte Open, a mere seven months after setting the goal and just over a year since getting back into the pool. As of this writing, she is the oldest first-time trials qualifier. If you watched any of the races in Indianapolis, you likely saw many swimmers achieving amazing things as older athletes. Kim said it best, "To anyone chasing their dreams, remember that it's never too late to push your limits and achieve great things. Keep believing in yourself and enjoy the journey!"



And what a journey it was! While she didn't swim as fast as she wanted to, Kim stayed positive and enjoyed her time in Indy spending time with family, friends and taking it all in. She shared some of her cool trials swag with us at a recent practice. When I was shocked she was using the kickboard she received (that thing would never leave my house...I'd lose it!), she just laughed and said, "Well, I guess I have to get another one in four years!" Some of her favorite things about trials were the unlimited chocolate milk and being star-struck by Olympians. I am seriously envious of how close she got to Caleb Dressel. Her most memorable highlight from this whole experience, though, has little to do with being at trials. The support of her Imp Masters teammates, New Wave Swim Team, family and friends, and her amazing husband has been more meaningful than anything. While Kim is a fierce competitor, she is the kindest, most humble person you'll meet, so this is of no surprise to me.

As for what's next, Kim is working towards breaking the 30-34 year-old 100-meter breaststroke Masters World Record. Coach Laura and I would love to see her tackle the 200 breast. The jury's still out on that one. She also states that it would be "really cool" to go under a minute in the 100-yard breaststroke. Really cool indeed.

~ Amanda Law

## Learning to Swim

Earlier this year, the Hawk Masters hosted a series of USMS training courses for coaches: Level 2 for stroke development, Level 3 for the nuts and bolts of running and managing a club, and the Adult Learn to Swim (ALTS) for people interested in helping never-ever or newer swimmers learn the skills and confidence to enter a pool. For some people in this category, it may be the first time they're confronting their fear of water and all that comes along with it. For my own advancement and interests, the ALTS class was my primary purpose for engaging with USMS to bring these clinics to Wilmington and encouraging others in our area to attend.

To gain some perspective, it's helpful to take a look at some of the "convincing statistics" USMS presented us with: There are 17 million + pools and hot tubs in the US More than 300,000 commercial pools 12,383 miles of saltwater coastline More than 1/3 of US adults cannot swim the length of a pool 52% are considered unsafe around water 10 people drown in the US each day, most of them adults If a parent does not know how to swim, there is only a 19% chance that a child will learn to swim

Like many adult swimmers, I don't come from an active swimming family. Although we belonged to a swim and tennis club growing up, I focused on the court. I liked my feet firmly planted on solid ground and avoided the deep end games. As a parent and adult swimmer, I made an effort to make my own family a swimming family from the ocean to the pool.

Today, as I evaluate my own ability to support the swimming community, ALTS is a natural place to dive in. Creating opportunities for others in my community to enjoy the water safely for physical and mental health, enhancing social connections and just plain having fun are benefits I can pass on to others. And after reviewing the statistics above, it's more imperative to take on this challenge and I encourage everyone to think about doing the same.



## NCMS Annual Awards

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I am excited to announce that the NCMS Awards Committee has refreshed the annual program. These new awards will be presented each year at the NCMS SCY State Meet. This year the meet will be in Cary March 29-30, 2025.

The period of eligibility will be the USMS membership year from November 1-October 31. This year's nominations will be due NLT January 20, 2025 to be considered. You can self nominate or submit for a teammate, coach or friend. ***Submission information will be forthcoming on [ncmasters.org](http://ncmasters.org).***

I know there are so many deserving swimmers within NCMS. Look around and take a few minutes to nominate yourself or a fellow swimmer so we can give recognition where it is due. The Awards Committee is looking forward to receiving a plethora of nominations! Get busy!

*Celia Wolff, Vice-Chair  
Hawk Masters Swimming*

### New awards for NCMS:

1. **Team Growth Award-** awarded to the NCMS club or workout group that has the highest percentage growth, based on the number of registered swimmers in the past year from November through October. *The winner will be awarded a banner to hang at your pool. Nomination is automatic for all teams.*
2. **King or Queen of the Pool-** awarded to the NCMS member with the most *Individual events swum* in the past year, November through October. (Not ENTERED but actual events swum.) Swimmer may self-nominate or be nominated. *The winner will receive an Embroidered Gear Bag.*
3. **Most Improved Newcomer-** awarded to First year masters swimmers only competing in meets with the largest percentage time drop in any one event in the USMS year, November through October. Swimmer or coach may nominate. *The winner will receive an Embroidered Gear Bag.*
4. **Teammate of the Year-** awarded to the swimmer who displays some or all of the following attributes: hard worker, encouraging and supporting of others, positive attitude, honest, is a team player, goes above and beyond. Nominations must be submitted by a coach or teammate. *The winner will receive an embroidered gear bag.*
5. **Recognition for World Records set by all NCMS Individuals and Relay Teams-** no nomination needed.
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## Postal Relay is coming to NCMS!

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I invite our North Carolina teams and workout groups to join in some good-natured relay competition starting in November. I will be sending out a relay challenge for you to swim at your practice. (Ex. 200 mixed medley relay, 18+ and 45+) Build your team. Time yourselves with a stopwatch, then submit your time to see where you stand against other teams in the state. This will be on the honor system so let's all play by the rules! I will post the results on our socials so be sure to like and follow! Get ready for some fast and fun swimming! We will do one relay each month so you will have more chances for bragging rights. Let's go NCMS!

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## Coaches Corner

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### Coaches Beware! It's an Information Download!

Happy Fall to all of my fellow NCMS coaches! Keep your eyes peeled on your inbox for a brief synopsis of the National Coaches Clinic happening on October 18-20 in Houston, TX. I will be sending out my notes for you in the next week or two along with the minutes from the USMS Coaches Committee.

I hosted our first North Carolina coaches call on September 23 with discussions on how to start a team, how to build your team, USMS club resources and some issues within North Carolina. There were 6 coaches on the call who shared their comments, suggestions and issues. I plan to host our second call in January once things settle down from the holidays. If you have a topic you would like discussed, please email me at [ikeepswimming@gmail.com](mailto:ikeepswimming@gmail.com) and share your ideas! I would like to address topics of interest to YOU but I do not know what those are unless you tell me.

As we approach Halloween, Thanksgiving and Christmas, why not consider a themed workout? You can throw in some tombstone or zombie kicking, have a turkey shoot using a nerf gun to select the next set, have a New Year's countdown workout. If you have some themed workouts you would like to share with your fellow coaches, send me an email! I will send them out in my next email and will post on our North Carolina Masters Swimming page on social media. Speaking of which, if you are not liking our [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) pages, what are you waiting for? Like, follow and share with your teams too!

*Just a few reminders for you.*

**1-If you are coaching a USMS practice** from *IN the pool*, your workout is NOT covered by our liability insurance. You must be on deck and all swimmers in the practice need to be registered with USMS or have a trial membership.

**2-If your team is planning to host a swim meet**, please send in your tentative or firm dates to me so we can get them onto our NCMS calendar as early as possible.

**3-If you are currently coaching USMS practices** and are not on my NCMS coaches distribution list, please email me directly with the team you coach and location so I can add you into our community. There is no requirement to be a USMS certified coach, just be in a coaching position. I am here to help you out!

I look forward to seeing you on a pool deck soon!

*Celia Wolff, NCMS Coaches Chair*

Do you think coaching might be for you? NCMS offers scholarships for reimbursement to take coaching classes offered by USMS. Here are some comments from some of NCMS coaches on taking these classes.

I've been swimming Masters for over 25 years and every now and again I've had the chance to stand on deck and (pretend to) coach. Confession: I don't see myself becoming a coach or starting my own program, but I enjoy brainstorming creative workouts, doing them with friends, and I never seem to get tired of watching others swim. So... a few months ago, on a whim, I signed up and completed the online Level 1 Masters Coach class and enjoyed it. When I heard that a Level 2 class was going to be in Wilmington in May, I jumped at the

opportunity and signed up immediately. Have a day at the beach, spend a night in a hotel, learn new things and meet like-minded people, why not?!

The 4-hour class and certification was well worth my time. The focus was on technique, efficiency, and injury prevention. Strokes and techniques have really evolved over the years, and while I knew this in my brain, I spent very little time incorporating these changes in my body.

This class really opened my eyes and I know I took away immediate improvements and long-term benefits for my swimming. If I get the chance to share what I learned with friends and teammates - bonus!~ *Liz Rosen*

Recently I had the opportunity to attend the Level 2/3 USMS Coaches Training and the Adult Learn to Swim Course in Wilmington, NC. For years it has been my goal to further myself in the US Masters Swimming Program and finally I had the opportunity.

While there not only did I further my knowledge but I met amazing instructors and fellow swimmers. It was amazing to see the wealth of knowledge that each person provided. I was able to return to my home facility and apply the information that I learned and to see the swimmers successful transition in the water is truly amazing. I definitely recommend these programs whether you are a coach or a swimmer. My hope is to one day be able to teach others in the USMS Program. ~ *Sandra Watson*

### Try a USMS Virtual Championship!



Have you wanted to compete on the national level but don't want to spend all that money on travel? Well here's your chance. USMS hosts five virtual championships throughout the year.

Right now the 3k and 5k virtual championships are going on until November 15<sup>th</sup>. It can be done in any 25 yard or 25 meter pool. All you have to do is get a buddy to time you swimming either the 3,000 or 6,000 (or both!). Just get your splits for each 50, sign up online at [usms.org](http://usms.org) (\$15) and record your splits in their simple to use on-line form. The top six finishers in each age group receive USMS championship medals! Bling baby! And if we get enough swimmers there are virtual relays as well giving you a chance at even more medals! And we can even win money for NCMS, the top three clubs win a cash prize (1st \$300, 2nd \$200, 3rd \$100)

Starting in January, the hour virtual swim challenges you to see how far you can swim in an hour. And from May 15<sup>th</sup> – September 15<sup>th</sup> there is the 5k and 10k LCM challenges. And if you swim all five virtual championships in a year, you can earn the Virtual Championship Series Challenge patch!

## Relighting the Fire

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As a child growing up swimming was always part of my life. I was blessed to grow up in a coastal community with a pool and a beach nearby. Countless memories were made around the events that took place in and around the water.

When I got older, I became a lifeguard at the local beach; and had dreams of becoming a swim instructor. Within those dreams I envisioned kids of all ages. It never crossed my mind that adults would need swim lessons. Maybe this naïve assumption was based on my young age, or more likely my limited knowledge of what life was like outside of my very small village in coastal Connecticut. Before I knew it, I had grown up, and became a busy working woman with no time for swimming.

Over the years I have always worked out, but swimming wasn't in the picture. At 50 years old, I was introduced to triathlons. I was back in the pool once again! It was at one of these race's that I met a group of people who mentor first time triathletes to compete in their first triathlon. This experience is what enlightened me to the need for adult swim lessons. It also enlightened me to a whole new mindset. Not every kid learns to swim, not every family has access to a body of water, not every parent has the ability or skill to make sure their children can swim. In fact, many parents don't want their child or themselves anywhere near water due to the fear of drowning being a greater fear than that of learning to swim.

The statistics shared in my Adult Learn to Swim course were staggering. Thanks to this class, it has reignited my desire to teach! I want to reach as many people as I can. Not only children, but also adults of all ages. during my retirement years, I plan to spend them in the pool working as a swim instructor. More importantly volunteering my time working with new swimmers and helping share the fun, health benefits, and relaxation that swimming has to offer. Most importantly the lifesaving skills to be safe around and in the water.

If you're considering extending your reach please consider this clinic, I highly recommend it. It doesn't require you to be an expert swimmer, just a swimmer who wants to share the joy of the water with others. The class is well run, the instructors are very knowledgeable, it's only one day, provides you with a wealth of information and tools to begin sharing what you have learned, and it is fun working with others with similar interests!

Many thanks to US Masters for providing this service and a special shout out to Amanda Law of The Cary NC Imp's for introducing me to our amazing group and to Masters swimming! ~Barbara Cline



## Upcoming Meets

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There are several meets coming up within NCMS ([ncmasters.org/page.cfm?pagetitle=Calendar+Upcoming](http://ncmasters.org/page.cfm?pagetitle=Calendar+Upcoming)) and the South East Zone ([southeastzone.org/meets.html](http://southeastzone.org/meets.html)).

### *Short Course Yards meets*

September 15<sup>th</sup> – November 15<sup>th</sup> USMS 3K and 6K virtual Championships

**November 2<sup>nd</sup> Funvitational hosted by Hawk Masters, Wilmington, NC**

December 14<sup>th</sup> St. Nick's SCY Invite, Atlanta, GA

**February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Jerry Clark Sunbelt Championships, Charlotte, NC**

February 15-16<sup>th</sup> Auburn Masters Invitational, Auburn, AL

March 14-15<sup>th</sup> St. Patrick's Invitational, Kingsport, TN

March 15-16<sup>th</sup> Dynamo Masters Meet, Chamblee, GA

March 15-16<sup>th</sup> St. Pete Masters/Bob Beach Championships, St. Petersburg, FL

**March 29-30<sup>th</sup> South East Zones and NC Championships, Cary, NC**

**April 24-27<sup>th</sup> – USMS Spring Nationals, San Antonio, TX**

### *Short Course Meters meets*

November 2-3<sup>rd</sup> Shark Tank Meet, Sarasota, FL

November 16-17<sup>th</sup> Fort Lauderdale Classic, Fort Lauderdale, FL

December 6-8<sup>th</sup> South Carolina SCM State Meet, North Charleston, SC

December 7<sup>th</sup> Crawfish Invitational, Baton Rouge, LA

January 31<sup>st</sup> – February 2<sup>nd</sup> – Rowdy Gains Classic (rescheduled from October), Orlando, FL

### *Long Course Meters meets*

July 11-12<sup>th</sup> Dog Days of Summer, Augusta, GA

July 12-13<sup>th</sup> SPM Long Course Championships, St. Petersburg, FL

**Aug 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> USMS Summer Nationals, Federal Way, WA**

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