

## Steve Barden Memorial Swimming Meet Recap

**By Andrew Pulsifer**

The beautiful mountains and surrounding area of Asheville was the destination for almost 75 swimmers from 10 USMS clubs and two local colleges recently, as the 8th annual Steve Barden Memorial Swimming Meet, hosted by Asheville Masters, unfolded on Saturday, September 14th at both the Asheville School pool and nearby Biltmore Lake. Swimmers and their groupies proudly represented at least 50 states of physical and mental fitness!

Bright and clear outside,, the six-lane, 25-yard course had plenty of windows to let that sunshine in, as swimmers checked off race after race, with all traditional pool events under 500 yards being contested. The mixed medley relay got things started, with an unconventional take on creating relays...if you wanted to swim, you showed up behind the block and were given a lane with other relay swimmers, un-scored, of course! From the smiles and glad-handing, contestants seemed to enjoy this relaxed approach.



The 400 IM, absent from last year's meet, returned, with Judd Jones (M, 55-59) and Detra Cleven (F, 44-44) leading the way and winning their heats in the longest pool event of the morning. Many contestants had just a few minutes between events, so, occasional extra breaks were taken to accommodate for recovery.

The final 200 Free Relay (un-scored, of course) has taken on mythical status, as 6 teams assembled and gave drink orders for either an adult or family friendly beverage. Drinks were lined up at shallow end and then each swimmer sprints 25 yards, drinks, and sprints back with a smile. All events took just about two and one-half hours.



The fantastic weather continued in the afternoon for the open water event just down the road at picturesque Biltmore Lake. The 75F air AND water temperature enticed not only the seasoned open water swimmers, those new to the genre and even a few spectators who wished they'd signed up!

Both the half-mile and one-mile racers lined up together and started from the shallow water, swimming a counter-clockwise triangle, one-loop for the half-mile, two for the whole. UNC-Asheville swimmer Morgan Dickie was the overall winner for the mile, and local attorney, Jeff Owen (Asheville Masters president) won the half-mile.



After a short rest, anyone wanting to swim the 200 meter (give or take a few meters!) lined up and off they went. UNCA assistant swimming coach and former University of Georgia NCAA champion Claire Maust showed the field that she can still bust a move with her overall win!



With 13 safety boat kayakers on the course, many eyes provided a great safety net. Some swam their first open water that day, others had swum dozens, one swam butterfly, all seemed to have fun, and how could you not have a great time at such a beautiful venue? An after event BBQ catered from a local joint added to the feel that summer wasn't quite over!