

USMS Spring Nationals

By John Klein

The 2012 USMS Spring Nationals will be held at the beautiful and fast Greensboro Aquatic Center April 26-29. You had that date penciled in, now is the time make sure you are free at the end of April so you can ink those days in on your calendar.

We have not had a big masters meet like this come to North Carolina since 1992. Meet directors Don Gilchrist and Hill Carrow have been working tirelessly to make sure this is the best nationals ever. The facility and location can't be beat. Top notch officials have been brought in to insure an efficiently run meet. The Saturday night social will have live bluegrass music and great food. The atmosphere will be welcoming and you will feel comfortable being around 2000 fellow masters swimmers.

While we will be able to enjoy the grace and speed of former Olympians and Olympic hopefuls, the vast majority of swimmers will be regular folks who will be trying to beat their own personal records. Please see the inspiring article by masters nationals first timer Shiana Barbosa recapping her experience at last summer's nationals in Auburn. <http://www.ncmasters.org/nl/aug11-article1.pdf>

As she mentions, **every registered masters swimmer may swim 3 individual events and up to 4 relays at the meet WITHOUT having a qualifying time.** For each qualifying time you achieve you are allowed an extra event up to 6 individual events.

Relays are a highlight of the meet because they bring people together and spur us on to faster swims. They give us a chance to encourage team mates and have folks cheer for us. The relays NCMS will have can be made up of families, friends, school mates, etc. We will also be putting together relays of people from around the state who do not have a 4 person relay already formed, in fact most of the relays will be formed this way. In the early spring you will receive an e-mail asking about your availability for relays along with times for 50 yard swims of strokes you would be willing to swim on a relay. From this data we put together the relays. NCMS had almost 100 relays when we brought 125 swimmers to nationals in Atlanta in 2010. It is likely NCMS will have over 300 swimmers at nationals with about that many relays. There will be a relay for everyone who wants to swim on one regardless of ability. When I swam on family relays at a masters meet this past spring with my parents, sisters, aunt, cousin and brother-in-law we had swimmers from 45-82 years of age. Several of the 70+ year old swimmers had NEVER swum in a meet and they chose to start in the water - perfectly legal in masters swimming.

After Jan 1 the full meet brochure should be available on-line and it will also be in the upcoming copy of USMS Swimmer.

I hope to see you in Greensboro. Train well.