



**USMS Spring National Championships, Mesa, AZ**  
**By Jon Klein**

*Pictures courtesy of: Elizabeth Nowak and Eric Braun*

29 desiccated NCMS swimmers trekked out of the windswept Arizona desert triumphantly carrying the 4<sup>th</sup> place regional team banner of the 2011 USMS Spring National Championships. Led by coach Patty Waldron our team spanned 8 decades from the newly minted college graduate contingent to nonagenarian Ole Larson. The venue was the beautiful Kino Aquatic Complex in Mesa. The hosts were both gracious and unbelievably efficient in their running of the meet. The officials often had the meet up to 45 minutes ahead of the timeline to the chagrin of one unnamed 58 yo breaststroker from Durham who missed his event.



We were treated to some amazing swims by Ed Moses in the breaststroke as he broke the national record in the 100 and almost in the 50 en route to an incredible 1:56 in the 200, and Rowdy Gaines at age 50 still able to go 21.3 and sub 47 in the 50 & 100 freestyle events.

The sunny, zero humidity, breezy conditions left us with dried mucous membranes, parched lips, frizzy hair, sunburned cracking skin, and hacking coughs.

Despite the conditions Team NCMS swam admirably with standouts Erika Braun, Peter Hollett, and Ole Larson coming home as national champions. We fielded 24 relays composed of swimmers from all over the state, and we marveled at how previous strangers

magically appeared at the same starting block to meld into a mighty relay team – points were scored, new friendships were made and we had fun.

Notable swims at the meet included: time drops by Alis Rojas Woodard, Dawn Bonfilio, Michelle “Pinky” Dempsey, and Joe Gosha; the Ironwoman award went to Mary Dore for her swims in the 50, 200, 500, 1650 Free, 200 Fly, and 400 IM; Anita Richardson courageously



swam her first ever 50 Fly in a meet on the Women’s 35+ Medley Relay. I must mention the inspiration my practice mates give me. Elizabeth Nowak had several top 3 finishes with only a former Olympian and USMS All-Star between her and a national championship in the breaststroke events.



Bob Schmitz wins the comeback swimmer of 2011 award after a 2 year medical hiatus. His comment, “I have hope I will be fast again” captures what many masters swimmers feel. Thanks go out to Henry Stewart in his efforts to bring fellow Colombian Felipe Gomez to join our ranks and help out on relays. Nationals meet regular Jamie Miller was drumming up support for the 2012 Championships that NCMS will host at the soon to be completed grand Greensboro Aquatic Center. Meet director Don Gilchrist was

seen all over the Kino pool not only swimming but scouting out all the logistics of putting on a national championship meet. He promises the 2012 meet to be fast, well run and loads of fun, I hope you will help Don by volunteering and swimming at the meet. See you in Greensboro in 2012 if not before.