

# Florida Gold Coast LMSC

## Newsletter - Winter 2011

### 2011 ZONE SCY CHAMPIONSHIPS

The 2011 Dixie Zone SCY Championship/18<sup>th</sup> Annual Fort Lauderdale Masters Challenge (February 25-27, 2011) has been designated as a Fort Lauderdale Centennial Event! Please spread the word and join us for "A Time to Celebrate!" A weekend of Competitive Swimming and Social Events to celebrate ALL that is Fort Lauderdale and USMS Swimming! Swimming has been such an instrumental part of Fort Lauderdale's first 100 years (82 years at the Fort Lauderdale Aquatic Complex.) FLA Masters and the City of Fort Lauderdale want to show that swimming will continue, for the next 100 years, to be the "Crown Jewel" on Fort Lauderdale Beach!

The meet website:

<http://www.flamasterschallenge.com/event-details/meet-information/>

On-line Registration:

[https://www.clubassistant.com/club/meet\\_information.cfm?c=156&smid=2840](https://www.clubassistant.com/club/meet_information.cfm?c=156&smid=2840)

**Register now! The online entry deadline is this Saturday, February 19.** The paper entry deadline has already passed.

### SWIM MEET RECAP

Since the last newsletter, there have been four sanctioned meets in the FGC LMSC.

On October 16, the Upper Keys Fall Invitational (SCM) was held at the Key Largo pool.

On December 4-5, the Coral Springs SCM Holiday Classic meet was held.

On January 22-23, the Plantation Masters held their SCY meet. About 70 swimmers braved the chilly weather for the first meet of the new year.

On February 5-6, Islamorada hosted the Upper Keys Winter Invitational. It was a small meet, but it is always a great location to go to.

Upcoming meets in the LMSC are:

Feb. 25-27 Dixie Zone Champs - Fort Lauderdale

March 5 John O'Keefe Spring Splash - Miami (FIU)

April 8-10 Hammerhead Invitational - Pompano Beach

The LMSC encourages all swimmers to support the meets in their home LMSC. These meets attract first-

time competitors as well as seasoned veterans. It is always fun to try new events and meet new people.

### REGISTRATION UPDATE

As of the end of the 2010 registration year, our LMSC had 1089 swimmers registered, about a 3% increase over the previous year.

As of February 15, there are 698 swimmers registered for 2011. A total of 518 swimmers from 2010 have not renewed. You can renew online at [usms.org](http://usms.org), or using the 2011 form that will be found on the LMSC website, [www.fgcmasters.org](http://www.fgcmasters.org).

Lost your USMS card? Moved to a new address? Changed your email address? Contact the FGC LMSC Registrar, Barb Protzman, at [swimbarb@hotmail.com](mailto:swimbarb@hotmail.com). Also, you can now update your address, email and phone online at [usms.org](http://usms.org).

### 2010 ANNUAL LMSC MEETING

The annual Florida Gold Coast LMSC meeting was held at the Coral Springs Aquatic Complex on December 5. The complete meeting minutes can be found on the LMSC website, [www.fgcmasters.org](http://www.fgcmasters.org). It was not an election year, but there was one change in appointed committee chairs. The Officials Chair is now Steve Goodman. Thanks to Debbie Cavanuagh for her years of service as the Officials Chair.

### 2011 USMS LCM NATIONALS

*Auburn Masters Swimmers Getting Ready For LC Championships*

Auburn Masters Swimmers (AMS) are getting ready to host the 2011 USMS Long Course National Championships, August 3-6, 2011. All races will take place indoors in the James Martin Aquatics Center, which many in the Dixie Zone know to be a fast pool with minimum 9 foot depth and a gutter system designed to eliminate turbulence. In addition, we will have three separate places for warm-up and warm down, including the diving well next to the competition course, an 8-lane 25 yard indoor pool immediately adjacent to the competition course, and an outdoor 10-lane 50 meter pool. I'm sure we don't need to tell Dixie Zone swimmers that it will be hot in Auburn in early August, or that afternoon thunderstorms might affect access to the outdoor pool. Short of hurricanes (anyone remember Savannah?) and tornados,

however, the indoor water should be safe in virtually all weather conditions.

Auburn is located approximately 90 minutes down I-85 from the Atlanta airport and 2 hours from the Birmingham airport. Swimmers also can fly into Montgomery, AL or Columbus, GA, which are less than 60 minutes from Auburn, though you usually need to fly through Atlanta anyway. There is a shuttle service (Express 85) that runs between Auburn and the Atlanta airport. We will have shuttle service between selected hotels in the area and the pool and free parking will be available in select lots around the pool.

AMS is able to host the 2011 LC Championships because we enjoy an excellent working relationship with Sarah Stallkamp, Director of the Aquatics Center, and with the Athletics Department at Auburn University. So good is our relationship, in fact, that Sarah will serve as Meet Director, sacrificing her own chance to race to make it possible for the rest of us to do so. Running the meet is not possible without the help and support of volunteers. If you are interested in volunteering please let us know at [ses0032@auburn.edu](mailto:ses0032@auburn.edu) or (334) 844-9622.

## FLORIDA OPEN WATER CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

Congratulations to the FGC LMSC swimmers who placed in the 2010 Florida Open Water Championship Series:

**W50-54:** Darcy Lafountain

**W50-54:** Karen Lewin

**M45-49:** Ricardo Valdivia

**M45-49:** Hugo Vila

**M50-54:** Russell Harbach

**M55-59:** Carlos Lloreda

The Florida Open Water Championship Series is based on a combination of results in open water events sanctioned by USMS that are held in the state of Florida during a given calendar year. It is not a separate swimming event itself. Events sanctioned by USA Swimming can be included if there is a separate Masters division.

To be eligible for awards and recognition, swimmers must enter and complete three open water events, one of which must be 3K or longer, during the calendar year. Official results of the event must be published online. Only the best three finishes will count for the final point total.

Swimmers are eligible for awards in only one USMS age group, even if they age up during the year. Event points will be based on the age group at each event. However, final results will be based on the age on December 31.

Within each gender, swimmers will be awarded points based on overall place finish and age group place finish, with bonus points for finishing within a set time behind the overall winner's time. In the event that a swimmer enters more than the minimum three required events, the best point finishes in each class and the third best finish in either class will be counted.

### 2011 Events

May 7: Hurricane Man, St. Pete Beach

May 28: Ed Gaw Open Water Challenge, Fernandia Beach

June 11: Crippen Mile, Ft. Myers

June 11: USMS 10K National Championship, Ft. Myers

Oct. 1: Daiquiri Deck Tropical Splash, Sarasota

For more information, check out [floridaopenwater.org](http://floridaopenwater.org).

## THE IV UANA PAN AMERICAN MASTERS CHAMPIONSHIPS

Join the Pan-American Swimming Union for the 2011 Pan American Masters Championships November 8-15 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Swimming, open water, synchro and water polo will all be contested. Don't miss out on this opportunity to compete internationally. More information coming soon.

## TOP TEN AND RECORDS

If you swim in a meet outside of the FGC LMSC and would like to have your times included in the LMSC top ten and be considered for LMSC records, please send a copy of the meet results or the link to the online published results to Chela Devanney at 11862 NW 25<sup>th</sup> Ct, Coral Springs, FL 33065 or [chela@devanney.com](mailto:chela@devanney.com).

## SWIMMING THROUGH BREAST CANCER

*By: Liz Pittinger*

*Reprinted from [www.usms.org](http://www.usms.org)*

In a few days, I will participate in my first swim meet, ever! No, I'm not 11-years-old like my competitive-swimmer daughter. I am a 39 years old stay-at-home mom who is a breast cancer survivor.

"You have cancer" are words no one is prepared to hear from her doctor. Last year those words were delivered to me. I had had friends diagnosed with cancer; my own mother was in the middle of her battle with the disease - but me? How could I have cancer so young?

I remember thinking, "Well the joke is on cancer! I'm super-strong!" I was averaging 4200 meters a day with the Masters swim team and lifting weights three days a week. I was the healthiest and strongest I had ever

been in my entire life. Beating cancer was the only option; beating it into the ground was my goal. What I hadn't counted on was how my workouts would be affected during the next 12 months and beyond.

### **Becoming A Swimmer**

First, let me explain how I became a member of the Coral Springs Masters Swim Team in Florida (FL GOLD). I was enjoying taking my little girls to the Swim America program at our local pool, headed by Olympian Biggi Lohberg. Twice a week I would watch my daughters learn different strokes and laugh all the way through practice. At the "big pool" behind me, however, were the teenage Nationals swimmers coached by Biggi's husband, Michael Lohberg, and Masters coach Chris Jackson. I remember watching the kids swimming and wishing I could have my "ballet legs" back. Needless to say, I hadn't danced in years!

The following day I went to the office and asked the kind lady behind the desk if there was a way I could sign up for swim lessons. She helped me pay and gave me the email address of the coach who would work with me. Great! I admit, I was a little disgruntled that I had been handed off to a male coach. I have always been reserved and wearing a swimsuit in front of a guy was not my idea of a good time. I wasn't overweight, having always led an active life, but I wasn't toned either. After being told there were no female coaches available, I shrugged and scheduled my first class.

I showed up for my first lesson later that week with the attitude that I was going to be the best student ever. My coach just happened to be the Masters coach, Chris ... you know, the one who works with all the beautiful Olympic and Nationals swimmers too. Great. Still ready to impress, I jumped in the water and prepared to swim a quick 50 so he could evaluate what needed work.

I should probably mention that I never, NEVER, had swim lessons! So, with my best "ballet arms" I swam a 50, only to emerge to see my coach laughing so hard that he was falling out of his chair. "Oh good God! Am I really THAT bad?" And that was the beginning of a beautiful friendship.

I continued to take lessons once a week and practice on my own another three or four days each week. Amazingly, sometimes in the lane next to me was Dara Torres. I just kept my head down, in what I hoped was perfect alignment, and I consistently became stronger, faster, and more efficient. The changes in my body were almost immediate. By the time summer arrived, my coach convinced me to join the Masters team and swim at 6 a.m. I knew I could do it, but I was so intimidated to join a group of what I refer to as "the beautiful people," some of the best swimmers in the world.

Still, I showed up. Granted, I swam on the periphery. After all, some of these folks have been swimming for decades, competed in the Olympics, and in a word are amazing. But what I also discovered is that swimmers by nature are very encouraging of one another. There were seniors who swam to stay in shape, there was a man who had lost a leg in a motorcycle accident, and together everyone helped each other out. This was a down-to-earth, positive group of friends who encouraged each other to push their boundaries. And our coach has the kindness to treat us all with the same level of respect, and the ruthlessness to push us beyond our comfort zones.

This was a group I was happy to wake up at 5:30 a.m. to be a part of. Overnight, my workouts went from 2600 meters to 4000. I still remember doing the math to add it all up. I was euphoric. The "swimmers high" I reached that day lasted through the evening. I certainly never got that from running, and I had no joint pains either. I was hooked—and swam almost every day that summer.

### **Cancer**

By the end of the summer, school was ready to start. My Masters coach had agreed to create another Masters group during the school day. I had begged and begged for weeks, cajoling the director of the pool to give us another time during the day as well. They both relented and I was ecstatic to be able to continue my Masters workouts during the school year. Now I would be able to get my kids ready for school and workout during the day with a great group of people.

What nobody knew was that over the summer I had been having a series of tests to determine if the spot the doctors were seeing on my mammogram were "false positives" or not. By the first day of school, my surgeon finally had the answer, "You have stage I breast cancer." I honestly think he was more surprised than I was. No one in the medical field seemed prepared that a 38-year-old woman would actually have this insidious disease. Apparently, I'm rare.

So much for the daytime Masters team. I had not swam for three weeks after the lumpectomy and now I was being rushed in for the lymph node biopsy. They actually had to cut through the muscle in my underarm to reach the nodes. Three weeks after that, however, and I was back in the pool. I needed to move my body, needed a swimmer's high, needed to work out my fear of starting chemo the following week.

The pain from moving my left arm for the freestyle was excruciating. I didn't have complete range of motion either and it was very stiff. I noticed the stiffness worked itself out the longer I swam so I grinned and bore the pain. I swam everyday that week and each day my arm motion became more fluid. The pain was terrible for the

first 1000 meters or so, and then was tolerable. I dealt with it, because I was beginning to rely on those swimmer's highs from the workouts again. I was strong already and swimming made me stronger. I needed this to prepare for what was to follow.

Then I started chemo. For the first three days I couldn't get out of bed. The Neulasta shot created such pain that I cried. I remember thinking I had to be strong and not scare my kids ... so I hid a lot of what I was feeling. But that would pass and then I would go back to the pool. And then I started losing my hair. Again, I would go to the pool just to keep my spirits up. No one seemed to notice I was bald as I wore a swim cap. I didn't have the same energy, and really just moving my body was the goal. I didn't even try to keep up with everyone. I did my own thing and after 30-45 minutes I would get dressed and sit on deck to watch the rest of the team. We laughed and cracked jokes. My team was giving me the relief from everything else that was going on, physically and mentally. My team, my friends, my family were keeping me positive and strong.

My workouts became non-existent. I got so that I would show up to sit while my team swam. We would joke and laugh and I would go home proud that I had gotten out of bed and driven somewhere, the goal for that day accomplished. Occasionally I would go to lift weights, 20 minutes or less, again just to get out of bed or the house. I was losing muscle, flexibility, and tone. The drugs were wreaking havoc on my body and energy. But I learned to just accept it and rely on my pool friends to keep me focused on the goal.

Radiation began after the holidays and many of my pool friends accompanied me to the daily sessions. Then I had more surgery. Finally by April I was ready to swim again and I had some hair on my head. I decided to go without a scarf and be with the people who had managed to keep me laughing and moving forward.

### **Return to Swimming**

I showed up to swim after months away and I remember feeling embarrassed by the effect all the steroids had taken on my body. I looked horrible! Still, I jumped into the pool and started moving. It took 45 minutes for me to swim 600 meters. I got out of the pool and one of the new lifeguards commented on my leaving so soon. I shrugged and said it was a rough first day back. He smiled and added, "You know what? Everyone has to start somewhere." He didn't know me—didn't know my story. And that one comment

lightened my load and made me realize that I had surrounded myself with the most positive, encouraging group ever.

Returning was difficult. I listened to my coach give me different workouts from the rest of the group. I tried to stay positive and just focus on my situation without trying to prove anything to some of the newbies who didn't know me. Mentally, it was so frustrating to have a fraction of the strength/stamina I had had the previous summer. But I learned to focus on the present. I worked hard and swam consistently. That was the key—consistency. Each month I noticed that I was adding another 1000 meters to my workouts. By summer, I was swimming with the group and keeping up on most days, albeit with fins. I added weights to my routine and was noticing a return to my former body, more muscle tone and flexibility. Sometimes my own head got in my way. I certainly had down days where I thought I would cry watching everyone else complete the set that I was just too tired to try. But then my coach's voice would ring in my ears, "Liz, you're not trying out for the Olympics. Be kind to yourself."

Several months later, my energy levels still fluctuate. Some days I am on fire, swimming 4000 meters or more and feeling strong. Other days I am happy to get in 2600. I smile when I complain about that, because I still think that's awesome. And although the pain from my lymph node surgery is still there, it's not nearly as debilitating as it once was. The more I use my arm, the better it feels.

No one can start at a level more elementary than I did—especially at a facility as intimidating as the Coral Springs Aquatic Center. But I grew into it—swimming is an art. It is constantly changing and it allows the swimmer to evolve with it.

So now, I am participating in my first swim meet this weekend. I bought a tech suit, with a pink stripe. I know I'm not going to set any records and may actually get a DQ on the 100IM, but I'm so excited that I'm about to burst. My focus is different now, more personal. This weekend I will hang out with my friends and try something new. And I know, no matter what my times are, I will have accomplished my goal ... by jumping into the water, I am beating cancer into the ground.

## FGC LMSC CALENDAR

Feb. 25-27	SCY	<b>Dixie Zone SCY Championships</b> – Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Mar. 5	SCY	John O’Keefe Spring Splash – Miami, FL (FIU)
Mar. 5	SCY	Ocala Marlins Spring Splash – Ocala, FL
Mar. 12-13	SCY	Daytona Beach Masters National Qualifier – Daytona Beach, FL
Apr. 1-3	SCY	St Pete Masters SCY Championships – St. Pete, FL
Apr. 8-10	SCY	Hammerhead Invitational – Pompano Beach, FL
Apr. 9	OW	Swim Miami – Miami, FL
April 14-17	SCY	YMCA Nationals – Fort Lauderdale, FL
Apr. 23	OW	14 <sup>th</sup> Annual Tampa Bay Marathon – Tampa, FL
Apr. 28 – May 1	SCY	USMS SCY Nationals – Mesa, AZ
Apr. 30 – May 1	LCM	May Day Sprint Meet – Ft. Myers, FL
May 7	OW	Hurricane Man – St. Pete Beach, FL
May 22	LCM	Ocala Marlins Summer Splash I – Ocala, FL
May 28	OW	<b>Dixie Zone Open Water Championships/Ed Gaw Amelia Island Open Water Challenge</b> – Fernandina Beach, FL
June 10-12	LCM	<b>Dixie Zone LCM Championships/Bumpy Jones</b> – Sarasota, FL
June 11	OW	USMS 10K Open Water Championships – Fort Myers Beach, FL
June 18-19	LCM	June Krauser Summer Splash – Ft. Lauderdale, FL
July 6-10	LCM	IGLA Championships – Honolulu, HI
July 9-10	LCM	St. Pete LCM Championships – St. Pete, FL
July 16	LCM	Ocala Marlins Summer Splash II – Ocala, FL
July 16-17	LCM	Upper Keys Summer Invitational – Islamorada, FL
August 3-6	LCM	USMS LCM Nationals – Auburn University, AL
Oct. 15-16	SCM	<b>Dixie Zone SCM Championships</b> – Charlotte, NC

For more calendar details, check out [www.fgcmaster.org](http://www.fgcmaster.org), [www.dixiezone.org](http://www.dixiezone.org) and [www.usms.org](http://www.usms.org)

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