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Only As Old As You Play

By Mikaela Cowles



Ann Bundy (2) and Carole Kay Lynn (4)
Photo Bob Johnson

interested in the competition while others are looking to learn a new game while getting a great workout. The team practices twice a week led by head coach Andrew Morrris at the Soda Aquatic Center at Campolindo High School.

H20's practice has paid off. They won the silver medal at their most recent demonstration tournament August 1-3. Johnson says they were all "pleased with the result, especially since the gold medal team had former members of the USA Women's National Water Polo team [playing]".

Competitions include periodic local tournaments, a yearly three-day Masters Clinic in Las Vegas and more serious competitions such as the Masters Nationals and FINA (International Federation of Swimming) Masters World Championship.

Connie Miller, the oldest Soda Mom, said, "When I was younger, they didn't have team sports for women really, so this is the first team sport I've played. It is a lot of fun." Miller was a member of the team in 2006 when they won the gold at the FINA Championship in the 50+ age bracket.

H20 is sponsored by the NSGA (National Senior Games Association). Founded in 1985, the NSGA has become a non-profit member of the United States Olympic Committee. It is dedicated to motivating men and women to lead healthy and active lifestyles.

Johnson is one of the newest members of H20, joining in the fall of 2007. As an "empty nester," she was looking for a new challenge while her life transitioned. The team has become more than just a way to workout; Johnson says, "I now really enjoy the tournaments. Coach Andrew and my experienced teammates are patient teachers, and traveling to a tournament with these ladies is always a great social experience."

H20 Soda Moms Water Polo member Jennie Johnson says, "Now in place of those years of meeting at the local coffee house early in the morning to carpool for a child's tournament, we meet for our own pre-game ritual...an extra shot latte, a bran muffin and a last minute check of essentials-sunscreen, eye drops, and ibuprofen."

As most women get older, they leave physical contact sports like water polo behind; but a group of local Lamorinda women are not "most women." The Soda Moms team is made up of women of all ages, from those in their 20s to their 60s. Johnson says, "This is a diverse group of athletes in all stages of life." She has a point: one pregnant teammate shares the due date as the first grandchild of another player.

Even though some competitions do not allow them to play together because of their age differences, they practice as one team. The women range wildly in skill level, many of them join without previous experience. Their reasons for joining are as different as their ages, some members are



Patty Trenkwalder Photo Bob Johnson

Reach the reporter at: info@lamorindaweekly.com

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