

LAMORINDA SPORTS

Masters Swim Meet Celebrates Community

By Rebecca Eckland



Swimming has taught me about beginnings. I didn't learn to swim properly until I joined the Walnut Creek Masters Swim team, a swim team for adults of all skill levels, almost two years ago after I'd injured myself training for the 2012 Olympic Trials in the marathon. I thought my time with starting lines had ended.

But on April 5, I competed in the 2013 Pacific Masters Short Course Championships held at the Soda Aquatic Center at in the 1650 Freestyle and 400 Individual Med-

ley. It was my first time racing in either event. After 66 laps, I took second place in my age group in the 1650 free with a time of 21:41.

In the 400 IM, I made a "rookie mistake," in an incorrect turn between back stroke and breast, which disqualified me. My coach Kerry O'Brien noted that it was all part of the learning curve. "You won't ever make that mistake again," he said. And I won't. Not at the next "beginning."

Meet Director Chris Stewart explained that the unique part of

Masters swim meets is the diversity of the athletes who enter. Ex-Olympians and novice swimmers of all ages, some well into their 70s and 80s, all participate together.

"The largest age group this year," he said, "is the 55-59 age group." There were 615 registered to swim April 5-7 from 69 masters teams, bringing swimmers from all over the state to the Lamorinda area.

Donald Potter (47) competed in the 1650 free and the 500-mixed relay. Potter joined the Walnut Creek Masters four years ago and has been "hooked" ever since. "It's great to have a core focus like this outside work," he said. He swam Friday and, like many of his teammates, volunteered as a lane and head timer on Saturday.

Potter was joined by teammate Nay Anderson (58), who also swam the 500 Free, the 50 Back and 100 IM.

She hopes to be able to keep swimming without injury in the future. "I'm not much of a goal-setter, but I do plan on swimming for as long as I'm physically able to," said Anderson.

Brant Allen (49) of the Sierra Nevada Masters from Reno used the meet to gauge his fitness in preparation for the National Meet which will be held next month in Indianapolis.

"I want to swim until I'm old enough that people clap simply because I'm in the pool," he joked. Allen won the 50 Back and the 100 Free and took second in the 100 IM, the 50 Breast, 50 Free and 100 Breast.

Swimming can be a solitary pursuit: but events like this one bring everyone together to celebrate all our athletic beginnings. For results visit: http://www.pacificmasters.org/swmeets/2013_04_05_PMS_SCY/

Saint Mary's Wins in Nail-Biter

By Hunter Hewitt



Seif El Sherbini

Photo Tod Fierner

Saint Mary's men's tennis player Seif El Sherbini let out an emotional roar, and his teammates rushed over and huddled around him in triumph after a tough win. El Sherbini beat Chas Okamoto of Hawaii in a hard-fought match on April 7, securing the victory for his team in what was a highly competitive non-conference contest.

The Gaels defeated the Warriors 4-3, improving their overall record to 9-9 with a 3-1 record in West Coast Conference play.

"It is really special to be in the deciding match," the junior El Sherbini said. "The team was counting on me, and I told myself it was now or never. I just went for it and everything worked out."

Saint Mary's began the day

with an early 1-0 lead after sweeping Hawaii in the three doubles matches.

Senior Jesse Kiuru and freshman Thomas Hunt both prevailed in singles play, but the Gaels also lost three matches. With just one match left in play, the score was even at 3-3.

After El Sherbini and Okamoto split the first two sets, their final set came down to a tiebreaker. Fueled by the spirit and energy of his teammates cheering for him on the adjacent court, El Sherbini pulled away in the tiebreaker, capping off an emotional victory on a windy day in Moraga.

"Seif showed a lot of grit to come back in the deciding match," Gaels head coach Michael Wayman said. "The conditions were difficult

today with the wind, and we haven't had that yet this year. I was expecting a close one and I'm glad we came out on top."

With five matches left before the WCC postseason tournament, Saint Mary's is currently tied for second place in conference. Wayman hopes his team can maintain its position and enter the postseason with the second-best record.

"We would love to be in the top two of the conference heading into the tournament," he said. "There are a lot of good teams in this conference, but I feel that we are starting to come into our own."

Although he is not ecstatic about his team's record, Wayman is very optimistic.

"We have a young team, and we are playing very strong programs," he said. "I can't say I'm happy with our record, but the record is not as important as the competition and the progress. I don't feel that we have played our best tennis yet, but the players are competing very well."

While he looks ahead to the rest of the season, Wayman is also looking to the seasons to come.

"I'm very enthusiastic about where this program is going," he explained. "We are on the verge of having an incredibly good program in the future. We are really knocking on the door."

Saint Mary's takes the courts again today, April 10 when they host San Francisco at 3 p.m.

Water Polo Clinics

CORE Water Polo Parent Informational Meeting and Social



April 24, 2013, 7:00-9:30pm

Location: 147 Gregory Lane, Pleasant Hill, Pleasant Hill Park and Rec Teen Center Lounge.

CORE Water Polo will be hosting a parent meeting and social for its current members and all new parents interested in learning more about our programs. This is a must attend for all parents looking to get their kids involved in the sport of water polo. It will be the official kick off to our upcoming Summer season and will include an important introduction to the club's new direction.

Programs take place in Lafayette, Moraga, Pleasant Hill and Concord.

Ages 9 - 18; College and Master's

For more information please contact

Kim Everist at kimeverist@everistcorepolo.com

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(we prefer to receive your original photo file, minimum size: 200 dpi and 1200 pixels wide)

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