



The Chlorine Chronicles Gulf Masters Swimming

Summer 2024

JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL SWIM TO SAN ANTONIO IN PREPARATION FOR 2025 USMS SPRING NATIONALS – DETAILS ON PAGE 4
(PHOTO CREDIT: NOCONATOM)

IN THIS ISSUE

USMS Is Bringing the National Coaches Clinic to Houston (October 18-20)

The USMS Coaches Committee and the National Office are excited to offer the 2024 USMS National Coaches Clinic in Houston at the IAH Airport Marriott on October 18 - 20. This is an event designed specifically to meet the needs of today's USMS coach. For the first time, USMS will host Relay and the National Coaches Clinic together. This will create new opportunities for information sharing, networking, and camaraderie.

In our continued efforts to give back to our members, the Gulf Board is offering \$250 grants to up to ten Gulf USMS coaches. In order to be eligible for the grant, coaches must be USMS certified. Additionally, they must be Gulf LMSC registered and living in the Gulf region. For more details, please click on the Grant form below.

[*2024 USMS National Coaches Clinic Grant Form*](#)

USMS Relay 2024 Being Held in Houston (October 18-20)

The USMS Relay 2024 will be held in conjunction with the National Coaches Clinic. The emphasis for this year's Relay is building the local swim community. The Gulf LMSC will have several attendees at the Relay, and we hope to bring back ideas and initiatives designed to build the Gulf's teams and the Masters swimming community.



Final Event in the Zone OW Series

With the OW series awards going three deep in six different categories, you will want to join in on the fun on Sunday, October 13. Details and registration information are provided.

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Photo Credit: Santeri Viinamaki

How Meal Planning Can Make Your Life Easier

While it might sound like adding more tasks to your week, meal planning can save time and reduce stress. Nutritionist Catherine Kruppa advises you how to get started.

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2023 Jesse Coon Award Winner - Nicole Christensen

At the recent South Central Zone Championships in Dallas, Nicole Christensen received the 2023 Jesse Coon Award. Gulf members already knew of Nicole's years of unwavering dedication to Masters swimming. It is fitting that the South Central Zone has now recognized her achievements with the award. Her nomination letter below sums up Nicole's service.

"If there was a definition for 'swim volunteer extraordinaire' in the dictionary, it would feature Nicole's picture beneath it. Nicole has been the consummate volunteer in the Gulf LMSC, the South Central Zone, and USMS for many years.

Nicole has been the race director for both the Sweetheart Swim SCY meet and the Graham Johnston LCM meet for over a decade. Additionally, Nicole was the driving force and event director for the South Central LCM Championships held at Texas A&M in 2016-2019. She was able to obtain a world-class facility, secure volunteers, provide an event social, and conduct a high-quality three-day competition despite the distance between her home in Houston and College Station.

Anyone who has attended any of Nicole's meets knows that they run like a Swiss watch. They are well organized, with ample volunteers, and excellent officiating.

Nicole's efforts are not limited to swim competitions. She has set up and maintains both the Gulf LMSC and South Central Zone websites, keeping both sites up to date and easy to navigate. She has also set up email blasts and social media pages for both organizations with the goal of providing better communication with all our swimmers.

Nicole was South Central Zone Chair for the prior four years. During her tenure, she organized a virtual Zone Championship meet during the pandemic. This was the gargantuan task of getting five different LMSCs to pick a common weekend, rent pool space, promote and conduct the meets, and then merge the results to determine our virtual Zone champions. Nicole also spearheaded a multi-event open water Zone swim series beginning in 2022 with three events in the Gulf, South Texas, and Arkansas LMSCs. The series expanded into North Texas in 2023, and it plans to host at least four swims in 2024. Nicole was term limited as Zone Chair to a four-year tenure, but she continues to assist the Zone as its webmaster and communications chair.

Nicole is currently the Gulf LMSC chair, ably organizing and overseeing the LMSC's efforts to provide multiple services to our membership, such as stroke development clinics, virtual fitness events, open water clinics, the annual Thanksgiving Day swim, Gulf Swim University, and multiple pool and open water competitions.

Nicole also volunteers on a national level. She has been a member of the LMSC Development Committee since 2020. Nicole's past committee memberships include the Championship Committee (2018-2019) and a previous stint on the LMSC Development Committee (2013). Her contributions have not gone unnoticed as Nicole was the recipient of the USMS Dorothy Donnelly Service Award in 2019 and the USMS June Krauser Communication Award in 2022. She has been a Level 1 and Level 2 USMS Certified Coach since 2011.

The five characteristics of a Jesse Coon Honoree are: (1) passionate advocate for the sport of Masters swimming, (2) promoter of Masters swimming in their local community, (3) supporter of swimmers, new and existing, in their pursuit of the sport, (4) volunteers to bring adult swimming opportunities to others, and (5) contributor to the success of swimming in our Zone over the years. I trust you will agree that Nicole would be a worthy recipient of the Jesse Coon award, as she exemplifies all five of these characteristics."

Congratulations, Nicole, on this well-deserved award.



South Central Zone Chair Jacky Merianos (left) presents the 2023 Jesse Coon Award to Nicole Christensen (right).

Swimmers Go Long at the Gulf's 5K and 10K Swims

Andreas Lorenz, Gulf Long Distance/Open Water Chair

Thanks to the generosity of Gilbert Legaspi, owner of SHAC (Swim Houston Aquatic Center), the Gulf LMSC held its first USMS 5K/10K Virtual Championship event on August 24 and 25. At a time when most pools have switched back to a short course configuration, SHAC was able to supply the 50-meter long course facility that USMS mandates for this event.

On Saturday, three gladiators of the pool lined up to test their endurance and see how fast they could conquer 5,000 meters. All three showed remarkable resistance to fatigue and homesickness for a couch. They completed the task without any breaks. The results were as follows: Emily Merkley 1:26:50, Emily Fleming 1:12:09, and Andreas Lorenz 1:10:02. Congratulations, well done.

For Sunday, a beast of a somewhat different color was on the schedule. 10,000 meters is a daunting project even for hearty souls. Four swimmers showed up prepared with fluids, gels, baby food pouches, and pickle juice. When you have to push off a wall 200 times while swimming for 2 ½ to 3 hours, your legs are screaming to cramp. So, preparedness is half the game. The air temperature was about 97 degrees and the water was a very reasonable 82 degrees (for this time of the year). Again, all four swimmers finished the program and, believe it or not, made it out of the pool without assistance. The times were very impressive, and, when the national results are published at the end of September, they will certainly rank very high nationally. Cheryl Brundage Hubbard almost broke three hours, swimming the first (and she thinks last) 10,000m of her life in 3:02:27. Aaron Schneider flew in from New Orleans just for this event and stopped the clock in 2:34:46. John Dissinger, one of Texas's best open water swimmers, finished in 2:30:22. Andreas Lorenz, needing the current in the pool on the last 50 meters just to finish, ended up with a time of 2:29:29.

Thanks to everyone for attending, to Nicole Christensen for counting and securing the pool, and to Gilbert for the pool access. Let's do it again in 2025, or NOT, whaddaya think Cheryl?



L to R: Emily Fleming, Emily Merkley, Andreas Lorenz



L to R: John Dissinger, Andreas Lorenz, Cheryl Hubbard, Aaron Schneider

Shark Attack at Lake Longhorn Two

Mark your calendars for Sunday, October 13 for the final event in the 2024 South Central Zone Grand Prix Open Water Challenge.

Come out to Lake Longhorn for a great open water swim. It's not just a race – it's an event! Available distances are 0.6 mi., 1.2 mi., and 2.4 mi., and swimmers can swim any combination of the events for one entry fee. It's a clean, calm, and safe swim – perfect for experienced open water swimmers looking for the next challenge and newbies too! You can sign up as a team, a club, or as individuals. Join the fun! Shark Attack is planned by an experienced USA Swimming and Masters coach, open water swimmer, and Ironman triathlete that knows Lake Longhorn well. The entire course is clearly visible from areas around the lake, and the spectators will be able to see the athletes throughout the race with an unobstructed view. There will be multiple safety kayaks placed along the course. It's a great time to come out and race!

For information and race registration, go to: <https://www.usms.org/events/events/shark-attack-at-lake-longhorn?ID=10621>



Gulf's Next Virtual Swim Begins on October 1st

Spring Nationals in 2025 will be held at the Northside ISD Swim Center in San Antonio. What better way to get your yardage up in preparation for the big meet than to virtually swim from Houston to San Antonio?

You may be thinking, "Whoa, wait a minute! That's over 220 miles!" There is a common conversion which we will be utilizing for the event that one swimming mile equals four running miles. That makes the distance of this fall's event a more manageable, yet still challenging, 56 miles to be completed between October 1 and December 31.

"The Road to San Antonio" virtual swim will start at Houston City Hall and will finish at the NEISD Swim Center. As no pedestrian traffic is allowed on I-10, the primary route will be along US Alternate 90, and the virtual swim will go through many historic and quintessentially Texas small towns such as Eagle Lake, Gonzales, Shiner, and Sequin. It's hoped that the challenge keeps you motivated and in the pool during the upcoming holiday season.

"The Road to San Antonio" segues into the 11th annual Gulf Swim University beginning on January 1, 2025. Both events should prep you well for strong swims at the Spring Nationals being held April 24-27, 2025.

To participate in the Gulf's San Antonio virtual swim, simply email Fitness Chair, Karlene Denby, at txswimmers3@hotmail.com and provide your tee-shirt size in your email. Then start tracking your mileage beginning on October 1, and look for email updates as the swim progresses.

How Meal Planning Can Make Your Life Easier

Catherine Kruppa, MS, RD, CSSD, LD

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Meal planning helps improve diet quality while also saving you time and money along the way! Many of us know this, but meal planning continues to be overwhelming. What if you knew that it would make your life easier? Would that motivate you to give it a try? As we head into the school year, nights will get hectic with sports, school activities, homework, volunteer commitments, work obligations, and more. This is a perfect time to get into the habit of meal planning. We all want more time with our family, less stress in the kitchen, and just more time, in general, during the week. Planning ahead can free up mental space and time that then relieves stress. Although meal planning looks different for everybody, the article below discusses tips and tricks that are useful no matter where you are on your meal planning journey. To be clear, meal planning is not meal prepping. We are talking about planning your meals for each night of the week. We will include some tips on prepping as well, but the goal of this article is for you to get meal planning down.

1. Start Small

Begin by planning just a few meals or snacks for the week ahead. Make sure to include date night or even a takeout night. The goal is to look at your family's calendar and decide ahead of time. You can slowly build upon your plan by adding in more meals. If you always get stumped when planning meals, assign weekly "theme nights" such as the popular Taco Tuesday to cut down on mental wheel spinning. You can also check websites, cookbooks, magazines, and social media for additional meal inspiration. Here are a few of our favorites: Skinny Taste, Cookie and Kate, The Defined Dish, and Pinch of Yum. If you live with other people, ask them to choose a recipe and cook one night during the week. This works great with children. If they choose the menu and help in part of the preparation, they are more likely to eat the meal. **Pro Tip:** A good day to do this is Thursday or Friday so you have time to shop over the weekend for the food you will need for the week ahead!

2. Balance Your Plate

Whether you are planning meals for a week, month, or just a few days, it is important to make sure each food group is represented in your plan. Whole grains, lean protein, healthy fats, fruits, vegetables, and low-fat dairy. A popular style of meal planning is to prepare individual items instead of the whole meal to help increase variety. It is easier to balance your plate by allowing you to check off each food group separately. For example, quinoa and rice for whole grains, chicken and ground turkey for lean protein, avocado and walnuts for healthy fat, mangos and apples for fruit, spring mix and lettuce for vegetables, and Greek yogurt and goat cheese for low-fat dairy. Out of these ingredients you can make a taco bowl using the rice, ground turkey, avocado, mangos, lettuce, and Greek yogurt or a harvest grain bowl using the quinoa, chicken, walnuts, apples, spring mix, and goat cheese. You can also use these same ingredients to make other meals like Greek bowls and a side salad using rice, chicken, avocado, spring mix, goat cheese, mangos, and more!

3. Keep a Well-Stocked Pantry

Maintaining pantry staples is a great way to streamline your meal planning process and simplify menu creation. Here are a few examples of healthy and versatile foods to keep in your pantry:

- Whole grains: brown rice, quinoa, oats, bulgur, whole-wheat pasta
- Legumes: low sodium canned or dried black beans, garbanzo beans, pinto beans, lentils
- Other canned goods: low-sodium broth, tomatoes, tomato sauce, artichokes, olives, corn, tuna, salmon, chicken
- Oils: olive oil, avocado oil, cooking spray
- Baking essentials: baking powder, baking soda, flour, cornstarch
- Other: nut butter, sweet potatoes, mixed nuts

4. Shop Your Pantry First

Before you plan your meals for the week, take inventory of what you already have on hand. Shop from your pantry, freezer, and refrigerator first and note the specific foods you want or need to use up. This helps you move through the food you already have, reduces waste, and prevents you from unnecessarily buying the same things. A good place to start is checking your produce drawer to determine what is about to go bad and incorporate those items into side dishes, salads, or other recipes. Check your pantry for dry goods that are close to their expiration date like lentils for soup or canned tomatoes for marinara sauce. **Pro Tip:** freezing foods that are about to expire like pesto, tomato sauce, hummus, guacamole, and herbs in ice cube trays makes them easier to defrost in the future!

5. Wash and Prepare Produce Right Away

To help you and your family eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, wash and prepare them as soon as you get home from the grocery store. If you open your refrigerator to find a cut up fruit or carrot and celery sticks ready for snacking, you are more likely to reach for those items when you are hungry. Also, do not forget to eat a variety of fruits and vegetables to provide your body with a wider variety of vitamins and minerals. **Pro Tip:** place the cut-up fruits and vegetables at eye level in the refrigerator to encourage consumption instead of hiding them in produce drawers where produce goes to die. Also, go to the refrigerator for a snack before going to the pantry.

6. Consistently Make Time

Meal planning must be a priority for it to work! However, it is worth the extra planning to save you time during the week and provide healthier meals for you and your family. We have many testimonies from families who started meal planning, and it actually REDUCED their stress. It can help to regularly carve out a block of time that is solely dedicated to planning. For some people, crafting a meal plan can take as little as 10-15 minutes per week. If your plan also includes preparing some food items ahead of time or pre-portioning meals and snacks, you may need a few hours. **Pro Tip:** spread the work out by planning on Thursday, grocery shopping on Friday or Saturday then spend about one hour preparing everything on Sunday.

7. Prepare Smarter, Not Harder

If you are not great at chopping vegetables or do not have time to batch cook and pre-portion your meals, there are likely some healthy, prepared options at your local grocery store. Pre-cut fruits and vegetables or prepared meals are usually more expensive, but if the convenience factor is what it takes to reduce stress in your life or get you to eat more vegetables, it may be well worth it. **Pro Tip:** if you do not want to eat pre-made meals then figure out which days are the busiest and plan to do simple sheet pan or crock pot meals for those days.

In conclusion, the more convenient and fun meal planning is, the more likely you are to consistently do it. A helpful tip when meal planning is to reuse the same foods in different recipes so that you are not buying 40 different items at the grocery store. An easy way to do this is by shopping for three recipes each week with one of them being familiar to you and another one being a freezer recipe for convenience. An example of a freezer recipe is frozen cauliflower rice stir fry with a protein added to it like eggs, meatballs, or a burger. We hope you find meal planning less stressful this year.

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Upcoming Pool Events This Fall

Saturday, September 21 - “There’s a First Time for Everything” SCY Meet, Houston, TX

First Colony Masters is hosting a SCY meet on September 21st at the Fort Bend ISD Practice Facility at 16701 Bissonnet, Houston, TX 77083. This meet is designed to encourage new swimmers to try a meet for the first time and for experienced swimmers to try new events in which they have never competed. The meet features distances from 25 to 500 yards. And you can sleep in. Warm-up is at 1 p.m. and the meet starts at 2 p.m.

Full meet information and registration is at: https://www.clubassistant.com/club/meet_information.cfm?c=2475&smid=18906

Sunday, September 29 - Texas Elite 2024 Fall Opener SCY Meet, Houston, TX

Texas Elite Swim Team Masters is hosting a SCY Masters meet at W.W. Emmons Natatorium, 10404 Tiger Trial, Houston, TX 77043.

The meet has a full complement of individual events, except for the 1,000 and 1,650 free, and will include men’s women’s, and mixed relays. The meet warmups will begin at the conclusion of the age-group swim meet, estimated to be approximately 12 noon. The meet will begin at 1:30 p.m.

Full meet information and registration can be found at this link:

https://www.clubassistant.com/club/meet_information.cfm?c=2647&smid=18912

Saturday, November 9 - Sunday, November 10 - Sabine Weiser SCM Meet, Shenandoah, TX

The annual Sabine Weiser November Classic SCM Meet will be hosted by The Woodlands Masters Swim Team and will be held at the Conroe ISD Natatorium in Shenandoah, TX. Registration is not yet open. Check on the Gulf website www.gulfmastersswim.org for registration and meet information. It should be available in the near future.

Pool Events in 2025 - Save the Dates

- February 16 Sweetheart Swim SCY Meet, W.W. Emmons Natatorium, Houston, TX
- March 8 or 9 Rice March Madness SCY Meet, Barbara and David Gibbs Recreation and Wellness Center, Houston, TX
- April 24-27 USMS Spring SCY Nationals, Northside ISD Swim Center, San Antonio, TX
- June (Date TBA) Graham Johnston Invitational LCM Meet, Dad’s Club, Houston, TX

WMST Swimmer Competes at USMS Summer Nationals

The USMS 2024 Summer National Championships were held August 21-25 at the Marguerite Aquatics Complex in Mission Viejo, CA. Hosted by the Mission Viejo Nadadores and meet director Michael Moore, the meet had 1,280 entrants.

Just one Gulf member, Bailie Cole-Evans of the Woodlands Masters Swim Team, made the trip west to the competition.

Bailie competed in the 50 free, 100 free, and 100 back in the very competitive 35-39 age-group. Bailie brought home some hardware with a 7th place finish in the 100 back. She also placed 12th in the 100 free and 17th in the 50 free.

Congratulations, Bailie!



This Quarter's Workout

Thanks to Gulf LMSC Coaches Chair and MACA coach, Patrick Harrington, for this quarter's workout.

Warmup: 200 swim/200 kick/200 pull/200 swim
4 x 50 free, descend 1-2 and 3-4

Main Set: Two times through this set, alternate stroke/free
The 4 x 25 are build to fast with a long enough rest interval for high quality swims.

4 x 25 stroke or free
1 x 300 pull
4 x 25 stroke or free
1 x 200 free, building each 100
4 x 25 stroke or free
1 x 100 free, build by 25s
4 x 25 stroke or free, alternate easy/fast (count strokes)

Cooldown: 200 stroke or free, easy and smooth

TOTAL: 3,200 YARDS/METERS

Submit Your Nominations for the 2024 Emmett Hines Award

Emmett Hines, a giant in the swimming world, passed away in November 2016. Emmett gave selflessly to Masters Swimming at the local, national, and international levels. Locally, he was the coach of Houston Swims and served as a volunteer in numerous positions within the Gulf LMSC over several decades. On the national level, he attended many USMS conventions, wrote articles for the national magazine, and served on the USMS Coaches Committee and the Coaches Certification subcommittee. Emmett's numerous contributions were recognized with the USMS Coach of the Year Award in 1993 and the USMS Dot Donnelly Service Award in 2014.

The Gulf LMSC leadership feels that it can best honor Emmett's legacy with an annual award that recognizes the Gulf LMSC individual who best emulates the enthusiasm, expertise, and advocacy of Masters Swimming exemplified by Emmett Hines in the areas of volunteerism and/or coaching.

Think about that special coach or volunteer who has made a significant impact on your swimming over the past year and consider nominating that person for the 2024 Emmett Hines Award.

Award criteria and submission information can be found at:

<https://www.clubassistant.com/c/81E5F81/file/Gulf%20LMSC%20Emmett%20Hines%20Award.pdf>

Nominations for 2024 must be submitted by September 30, 2024.



The Sixth Annual SAA-Houston Charity Swim is on October 5

The sixth annual Swim Across America - Houston charity swim will be held on Saturday, October 5, 2024 at its new location, the Margaritaville Resort on Lake Conroe in Montgomery, TX. SAA welcomes swimmers of all ages and skill levels to raise funds and help fight cancer. **Swim Across America ensures that all funds raised by the Houston event stay right here in Houston to benefit research and clinical trials at The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center.**

The event will feature half mile, one mile, and two-mile distance options as well as SAA-MyWay, a virtual event in which the athlete decides upon their activity and timeline.

Learn more about Swim Across America and the Houston charity swim at: https://www.swimacrossamerica.org/site/TR?fr_id=6471&pg=entry



THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS
MD Anderson
Cancer Center

The Final Virtual Championships of 2024 Begin on September 15th

USMS 3000/6000-Yard Virtual Championships

Both events will run from September 15 – November 15, 2024. You must enter the event prior to completing your swim(s). The entry fee is \$15 from September 1 – November 15. All entrants will receive an event latex swim cap.

Event Details:

- Dates: Sept. 15 – Nov. 15, 2024
- Objective: Swim 3000 or 6000 continuous yards or meters. Individuals may enter both events.
- Location: Any 25-yard or 25-meter pool
- Yards pool swimmers: submit your splits and final times in yards.
- Meters pool swimmers must swim 3000 or 6000 meters and submit your final times and splits in meters. The results system automatically converts meter times to yard times integrating them with the 25-yard final results.

Please note: The 3000 and 6000-yard swims are separate events, and you need to swim twice to enter both. Split times from 6000 may not be used for entry into the 3000.

Detailed event information can be found at: <https://www.usms.org/events/national-championships/virtual-championships/2024-virtual-championships/2024-3000-6000-virtual-championship>



Twenty-Five Gulf Swimmers Earn 2023-2024 SCY National Top Ten Times

The U.S. Masters Swimming National Top Ten List for 2023-2024 SCY swims was finalized and published in August 2024. Twenty-five Gulf swimmers posted one relay and 79 individual top ten times.

Congratulations to Brittany Bui (RICE), Bruce Kone (UNAT), Joann Leilich (WMST), Kevin Nead (RICE), and Kris Wingenroth (TFY) who swam the fastest time in the nation in one or more events.

All our national top ten swimmers are listed below.

Men

30-34: Alexander Aceino (UNAT)

35-39: Kevin Nead (RICE), Valentin Preda (WMST)

40-44: Tamas Kerekjarto (TEST)

45-49: Jonathan Armstrong (WMST), Jim Svoboda (CFSC), Benjamin Swan (RICE)

60-64: David Guthrie (RICE), Andreas Lorenz (DADS)

65-69: John Fields (RICE), Bruce Kone (UNAT)

80-84: Tom Boak (WMST)

85-89: James Rosborough (COOG)

Women

18-24: Brittany Bui (RICE), Lauren McDougall (RICE)

30-34: Margo Aceino (UNAT)

35-39: Alisha Anderson (DADS)

50-54: Linda Visser (COOG)

55-59: Jill Gellatly (UNAT)

60-64: Susan Matherne (RICE)

70-74: Kris Wingenroth (TFY)

85-89: Joann Leilich (WMST)

Relay

Mixed 25+ 400 Free Relay: Sarah Bell, Lauren Brabson, Tyler McFarland, Valentin Preda (WMST)